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YOUNG GUN RISING

Allison Zane Is Conquering PRS Circuits

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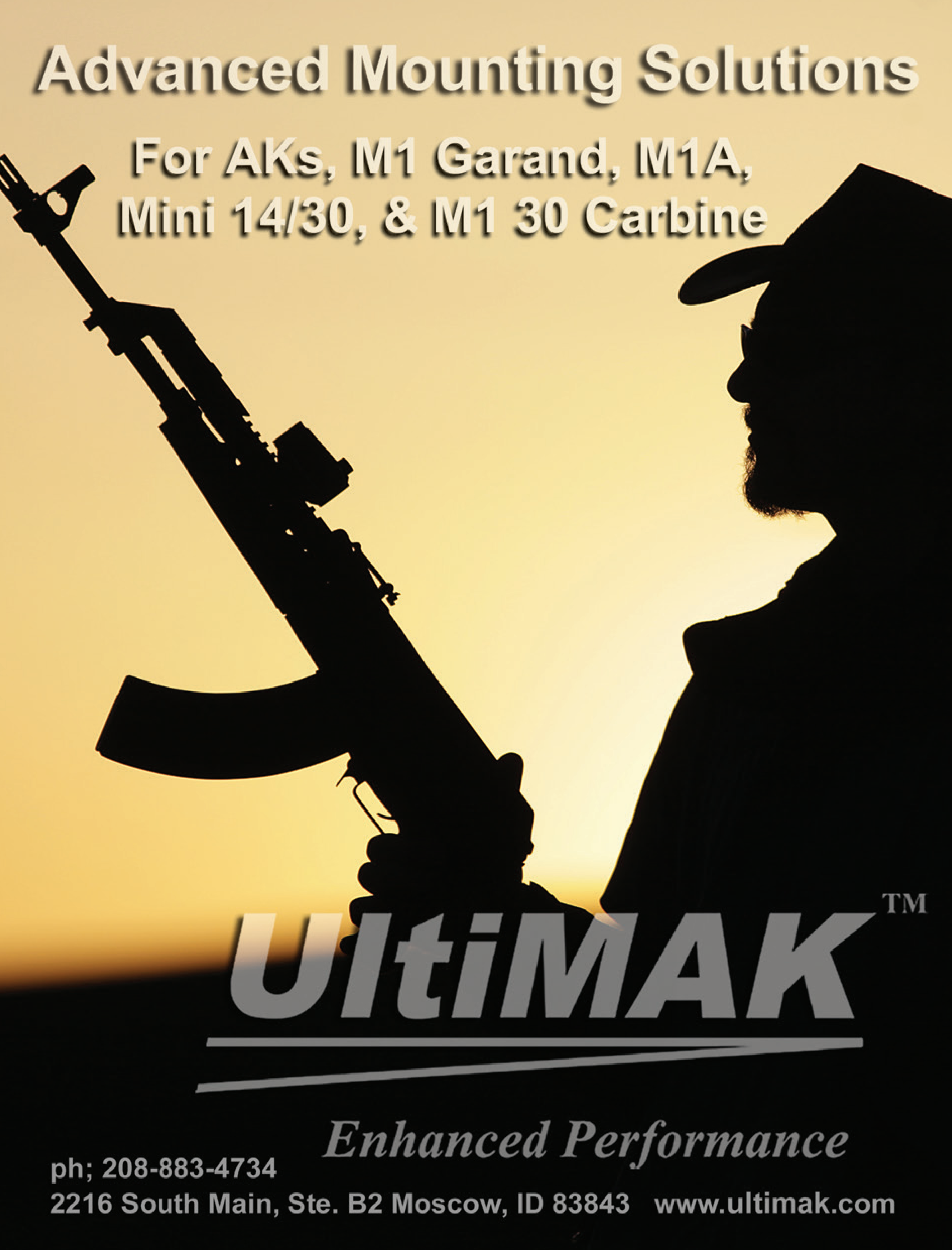
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ON THE COVER

Pittsburgh's Allison Zane has been shooting for half of her 16 years and nowadays competes very successfully in four different Precision Rifle Series circuits. How successfully? She's racked up eight national, regional and rimfire victories in 2021 alone! (ANGELA ZANE)

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(ANGELA ZANE)

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GUN SHOW CALENDAR

C&E GUN SHOWS cegunshows.com	September 4-5	Raleigh, N.C.	NC State Fairgrounds
	September 11-12	Hickory, N.C.	Hickory Metro Convention Center
	September 18-19	Columbus, Ohio	Westland Mall
	September 25-26	Concord, N.C.	Cabarrus Arena & Events Center
CROSSROADS OF THE WEST GUN SHOWS crossroadsgunshows.com	September 11-12	Phoenix, Ariz.	Arizona State Fairgrounds
	September 18-19	Tucson, Ariz.	Pima County Fairgrounds
	September 18-19	San Bernardino, Calif.	National Orange Show
	September 24-25	Ogden, Utah	Weber County Fairgrounds
FLORIDA GUN SHOWS floridagunshows.com	September 4-5	Miami, Fla.	Miami-Dade Fairgrounds
	September 11-12	Palmetto, Fla.	Bradenton Convention Center
RK SHOWS rkshows.com	September 4-5	Topeka, Kan.	Stormont Vail Events Center
	September 4-5	East Ridge, Tenn.	Camp Jordan Arena
	September 11-12	Independence, Mo.	Cable Dahmer Arena
	September 18-19	Atlanta, Ga.	Atlanta Expo Center
	September 18-19	Lexington, Ky.	Kentucky Horse Park
	September 25-26	Gray, Tenn.	Appalachian Fairgrounds
	September 25-26	Wichita, Kan.	Century II
REAL TEXAS GUN SHOWS therealtexasgunshow.com	September 4-5	Waco, Texas	Scottish Rite Library & Museum
	September 11-12	Orange, Texas	Orange County Expo
	September 18-19	Port Arthur, Texas	Robert A. Bower Civic Center
TANNER GUN SHOWS tannergunshow.com	September 10-12	Castle Rock, Colo.	Douglas County Fairgrounds
WES KNODEL GUN SHOWS wesknodelgunshows.com	September 4-5	Redmond, Ore.	Deschutes County Fairgrounds Expo Center
	September 11-12	Centralia, Wash.	Southwest Washington Fairgrounds

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To have your event highlighted here, send an email to kaumann@media-inc.com.

PRIMER

COMPETITION CALENDAR

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SEPTEMBER 11
LPDA PTO
San Antonio, Texas

SEPTEMBER 18-19
Team Shooting Stars PTO
Carrollton, Texas

SEPTEMBER 19
Maspenock Air Gun PTO
Milford, Mass.

SEPTEMBER 25
Cedar Hill Jr. Gun Club
Blackfoot, Idaho

uspsa.org

SEPTEMBER 3-5
Eastern Lakes Sectional Match
Glen Aubrey, N.Y.

SEPTEMBER 4-5
Northern Rockies Section Championship Match
Bigfork, Mont.

SEPTEMBER 9-11
2021 New Mexico Section Championship
Edgewood, N.M.

SEPTEMBER 9-11
2021 Arkansas Section USPSA Championship
Perryville, Ark.

SEPTEMBER 10-12
2021 Area 5 Championship
Wilmore, Ky.

SEPTEMBER 16-19
So Cal Sectional
Pala, Calif.

SEPTEMBER 17-18
Greater Yellowstone Section Championship
Billings, Mont.

SEPTEMBER 23-26
2021 Area 4 Championship
Tulsa, Okla.

SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 3
North Texas Open
Whitewright, Texas

gssfonline.com

SEPTEMBER 17-19
Glock Annual Shoot XXVIII & Gunny Challenge XVII
Talladega, Ala.

SEPTEMBER 25-26
Badger State Regional Classic XV
Milwaukee, Wis.

cmsaevents.com

SEPTEMBER 4
North Dakota State Shoot
Bismarck, N.D.

SEPTEMBER 4-6
Wyoming State Finals
Lusk, Wy.

SEPTEMBER 5-6
Western North Central Regional
Bismarck, N.D.

SEPTEMBER 7-11
CMSA Eastern US Championship
Murfreesboro, Tenn.

SEPTEMBER 18-19
Connecticut State Championship
Bethany, Conn.

SEPTEMBER 18-19
Mid Atlantic Regional Championship
Lumberton, N.C.

SEPTEMBER 24-26
6th Annual Renay Watt Memorial Shootout
Valley View, Texas

SEPTEMBER 25-26
Midwest Regional Championship
London, Ohio

idpa.com

SEPTEMBER 3-4
2021 Scorcher/New Mexico State Shoot
Rio Rancho, N.M.

SEPTEMBER 10-11
9/11 Tribute to First Responders AAFG IDPA Match
Annapolis, Md.

SEPTEMBER 10-12
Tri-County Sportsmen Challenge
Saline, Mich.

SEPTEMBER 22-25
2021 IDPA US National Championship
Palisade, Colo.

SEPTEMBER 25-26
Flag City Challenge Diamond Edition
Findlay, Ohio

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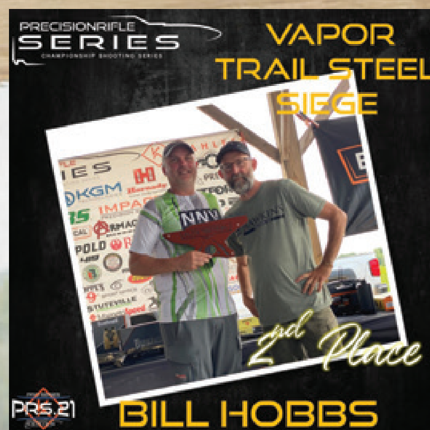
Pro Bolt Gun Series

September 4	**VPRC Rifleman's Revival**	*Rocky Mount, Virginia*
September 10	**2021 Federal Gold Medal Match**	*Carbon Hill, Alabama*
September 11	**Vortex Tactical Precision Rifle Challenge**	*Peoria, Arizona*
September 18	**MDT Great Lakes Steel Challenge**	*Lake City, Michigan*
September 25	**Road To Redemption**	*Warrenton, North Carolina*
October 1	**Bushnell Tactical Gap Grind Pro Am**	*Finger, Tennessee*
October 9	**Central Coast Chaos AG**	*San Luis Obispo, California*
October 15	**Kestrel Fall Classic AG**	*Baker, Florida*
October 16	**Alderbrook "Fall Brawl"**	*Littleton, New Hampshire*
November 6	**2021 PRS Pro Series Finale Presented By Kahles Optics**	*Raton, New Mexico*
December 4	**MPA Fall Shootout**	*Blakely, Georgia*
December 10	**AG Cup 2021**	*Finger, Tennessee*

For more information visit www.precisionrifleseries.com

RECENT RESULTS







VAPOR TRAIL BULLETS STEEL SIEGE

Spickard, Missouri
August 7, 2021

1st Place
BEN GOSSETT Open Div.
169.000/100.000
1st Place
BILL HOBBS Open Div.
169.000/100.000
3rd Place
JIM SEE Open Div.
166.000/98.225



(PRECISION RIFLE SERIES)

4th Place
GREG HARRIS Open Div.
163.000/96.450
4th Place
SCOTT WEAVER Open Div.
163.000/96.450
4th Place
MATT SOBOTKA Open Div.
163.000/96.450



IMPACT PRC

Wetumka, Oklahoma
August 14, 2021

1st Place
NICK GADARZI Open Div.
160.000/100.000
2nd Place
CHRIS KUTALEK Open Div.
157.000/98.125
2nd Place
BRANDON HEMBREE Open Div.
157.000/98.125
3rd Place
AUSTIN ORGAIN Open Div.
153.000/95.625





4th Place
AUSTIN BUSCHMAN Open Div.
149.000/93.125
5th Place
ERIC ANDERSEN Open Div.
149.000/93.125

MAGNOLIA MELTDOWN

Carthage, Mississippi
August 21, 2021

1st Place
JEFFREY GUERRY Open Div.
172.000/100.000





2nd Place
SHANNON KAY Open Div.
169.000/98.256
3rd Place
DAVID WIESE Open Div.
160.000/93.023
4th Place
DERRICK ELLIS Open Div.
159.000/92.442
5th Place
BILL ALLISON Open Div.
159.000/92.442



(PRECISION RIFLE SERIES)

PRECISIONRIFLE SERIES
CHAMPIONSHIP SHOOTING SERIES

FAST-RISING YOUNG GUN

Pennsylvania honor student Allison Zane, 16, is well on her way to being a well-rounded competitor on Precision Rifle Series circuits.

PHOTOS BY ANGELA ZANE

Allison Zane is your typical teenage girl. The 16-year-old high school junior is an honors student who likes to hang out with friends, get her nails done and sleep in on weekends. That is, when she's not competing in – and oftentimes winning – Precision Rifle Series matches all over the country against shooters twice, even three times, her age.

Growing up with parents who are both police officers and a father, Frank, who is also a firearms instructor, Zane was first introduced to firearms safety and shooting when she was 8.

"They kept it fun and laid back, and I really enjoyed it and took to shooting right away," she says. "When I was about 11 years old, I decided I wanted to sign up for a four-position small-bore individual NRA qualification program at our local club. It was a challenging program and required me to learn positional shooting. I shot a pretty basic rifle, Savage Mark II FVT single-shot .22 rifle, with sling and peep sights. With my dad's help and guidance, I spent a couple of years working towards earning the individual qualification medals, from Pro-Marksman up to the highest rating of Distinguished Expert. The time I spent in this program taught me sound shooting fundamentals and positional shooting and would be the foundation that would help me go on to be a well-rounded precision rifle competitor."

Shortly after starting the NRA program, Zane's interest in long-range shooting was piqued after her father began taking her with him to long-range prone shooting competitions at Rayner's Range in Ohio.

"This would be the start of my passion for long-range shooting," Zane recalls. "My dad taught me everything he knew, and I got to experience shooting a centerfire rifle out to


Pittsburgh's Allison Zane has been shooting for half of her 16 years, beginning when her police officer parents taught her the basics and firearms safety. Nowadays she competes very successfully in four different Precision Rifle Series circuits.


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Allison Zane
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Zane credits her dad, Frank, for her interest in long-range shooting after he began taking her to competitions in Ohio. The duo shot together during a June 2021 regional PRS match in Ohio.



distances of 1,000 yards, which was pretty awesome! Once I learned the basics of long-range shooting, my dad introduced me to shooting precision rimfire competitions, which involved shooting in different positions and off of different props under time."

Zane was hooked, and at just 13 years old entered her first precision rifle rimfire matches in the NRL22 league, a division of the National Rifle League.

"I ended up placing in third place overall and was the Young Gun Champion in the 2019 NRL22 Championship that year," she says. "I



To get out of her comfort zone, Zane shot in field-style PRS Pro Series matches out west this year, including the Big Sky Brawl in Montana (middle left above and this image) and the Hornady Precision Rifle Challenge in Utah (middle right above). "I feel like this is what I need more than anything to grow as a competitor."







Zane takes aim during a July match in her home state.

have to admit, I really kinda shocked myself with my performance at the championship and it really fueled my desire to want to continue to learn and compete at a higher level. My dad decided I was ready to start shooting centerfire precision rifle matches, and he had Short Action Customs build me my first custom centerfire rifle. We started shooting local club matches together with my new rifle that same year, then eventually with practice, I went on to become a competitor in PRS regional-level centerfire matches in 2019 and then national-level PRS matches in 2020, which has really led me on an incredible journey."

It was a remarkable 2020 season for Zane. She not only competed on a national level against older, more experienced shooters, but she also defeated them at the PRS Pro Series Road to Redemption match at Frontline Defense Training Center in North Carolina. Zane is the first junior to ever win a national-level two-day match.

"This is something I am very proud of," she says. "It was definitely a memorable weekend for me. One thing that really stands out for me from that match was the amount of support I felt from everyone there, even shooters that I didn't know. Shooters were cheering me after day one scores came out, and at the awards, they even gave me a standing ovation. I went into the season last year without any real expectations, and definitely not expecting to win any big matches. I came away feeling that I accomplished way more than I thought I was capable of."

IN 2021 COMPETITION so far, Zane has pulled off three more national-level



wins, most recently at the PRS Pro Series Vortex Vengeance match at MKM Precision in Pennsylvania. In that match, she earned a perfect 300 points toward the 2021 PRS Pro Series points race.

"I am proud to be the first junior and lady to accomplish that milestone," says Zane. "The truth is, though, even with 300 points, I know that the competition out there is pretty tough, so I just plan to work hard and give it my best this year at the finale and see where I end up."

In addition to the PRS Pro Series, Zane also competes in the PRS Rimfire Series, the PRS Northeast Regional Series and the PRS AG Cup Series.

"This will be my first year competing in the PRS AG Cup Series, which I am pretty excited about," she says. "I am not sure how I will handle the pressure of it all and how I will stack up competitively against the competition, but I feel like it will be a valuable learning experience for me and help me grow as a shooter."

Zane will have to fit AG Cup Series matches into her already-busy competition schedule. "Ideally, I try to shoot on average at least one two-day match a month, one local or regional one-day match a month, and a rimfire match if I can fit one in," she says. "Last season, my first season traveling and competing nationally, I shot a total of 35 matches, which included 10 national-level two-day matches, 10 regional/club matches, and 15 rimfire matches."

Although she loves the competitive aspect of precision rifle shooting, Zane says that the community of people surrounding the sport was what really drew her in from the beginning.

"You won't find a better group of



Through last month, Zane – here taking her final shot during the Vortex Vengeance PRS Pro Series at MKM Precision in Kennerdale, Pennsylvania – had won eight national, regional and rimfire matches in 2021, bettering her five 2020 first-place finishes.

ALLISON ZANE'S RIFLES & GEAR

"I haven't changed up much since I started in this sport and am very pleased with the performance of my rifle and gear," says Zane. "It has run flawlessly for me match after match, which allows me to stay focused on my shooting."

Zane's competition centerfire rifles are custom-built 6mm Creedmoor rifles built by Short Action Customs in Wellington, Ohio, with the following components:

- Action: Defiance Machine Ruckus action
- Chassis: Modular Driven Technologies (MDT) ACC chassis system
- Optics: Vortex Optics Gen II Razor rifle scope with 7C reticle
- Barrel: Hawk Hill Custom Marksman Contour barrel
- Trigger: Huber two-stage trigger set at 1.5 pounds
- Caliber: 6 Creedmoor
- Ammo: Lapua brass, 115 DTAC bullets, H4350 powder

Zane's rimfire rifle is built by Vudoo Gun Works with the following:

- Action: Vudoo Gun Works V22 action
- Chassis: MDT ACC chassis system
- Optics: Vortex Optics Razor AMG rifle scope
- Ammo: Lapua Center X

"My rifles are built almost identical to each other, allowing for an easy transition between the two and allowing me to use my rimfire gun as a great training rifle for centerfire," explains Zane.

Additional gear:

- Armageddon Gear brand shooting/support bags (the Pint Sized Gamechanger with heavy fill, and the Fat Bag)
- Vortex Optics Radian Carbon tripod
- Vortex Razor HD rangefinder
- Vortex UHD 18x50 binoculars
- MDT Cyke-Pod bipod
- Area 419 RailChanger X plate
- Kestrel 5700 Elite ballistic calculator
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"You won't find a better group of people to spend your weekends with," says Zane, here with her massive trophy haul from June's Vortex Vengeance match. Her score of 157.00 was three points better than her next closest competitor and earned her 100 points in the PRS season standings.

people to spend your weekends with," she explains. "The precision rifle community has become like family to us, and we look forward to going to matches and hanging out with everyone."

With the return of fall, Zane is back in high school, where she enjoys math and science classes especially. In fact, she hopes to pursue an engineering degree someday. And as for PRS matches, Zane has one goal: "I plan on continuing to work hard and do my best and see what I can accomplish. One thing I focused on this year was getting out of my comfort zone and shooting in some new places and in some different conditions. I shot a couple of field-style matches out west in Utah and Montana and although it was a little intimidating at first, I learned so much. I feel like this is what I need more than anything to grow as a competitor." ★

Editor's note: For more information on the Precision Rifle Series, visit precisionrifleseries.com.






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Two handguns, ready to fly. Note empty magazines and chamber locks on both handguns.

HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL [PART ONE]

Seven things to consider before you transport your firearms on commercial airlines.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY NICK PERNA

As a cop, I'm always amazed and frustrated by how complex firearms laws are. Most laws are relatively simple. For example, to commit the act of robbery, you need to permanently deprive (i.e. steal) something from someone using force or fear. It's essentially A+B=C.

In contrast, firearms laws, at the local and state level, are never this easy. Barrel lengths, magazine capacities and concealed carry regulations are mind-numbingly complicated. This is primarily due to the fact that people who don't have any idea what end the round comes out of – namely politicians – draft and codify these laws.

One area that deserves attention is transporting firearms from one place to another. What is legal in one state can be illegal in another. I live in "Commiefornia," which is bordered by the gun-friendly state of Nevada. A person can become an instant felon by driving west through Tahoe (a city with parts in both California and Nevada) if they are stopped by California law enforcement and have a "prohibited weapon" in their possession. It was cool to have in Nevada, just not west of there.

In this article, I'm going to focus on flying with firearms; next month, I'll talk about shipping them.

KNOW THE AIRLINE. First, research the carrier's policies. Surprisingly, each one is different. For example, some airlines let you pack ammo and firearms together in the same box, while others require they be shipped



Don't attract thieves! When traveling with firearms, use a nondescript bag (minus the tape for easy locating at the carousel) that has a lock on it as well for extra protection.

in separate containers. All airlines post their firearms transportation regulations. Have a copy of them with you when you go to the ticket counter, just in case the airline employee is unfamiliar with them.

KNOW YOUR LIMIT. Some carriers limit the number of firearms that you can transport. I recently researched JetBlue's policies for shipping firearms. They limit you to two handguns and four long guns (rifles or shotguns). This is important to know. Say you've planned a once-in-a-lifetime hunting trip with a group of five friends and you agree to transport all their firearms. Imagine your chagrin when you are told at the ticketing counter that you are two over your limit! Who doesn't get to use their gun? (Probably you and the guy you like the least.) More importantly, what do you do with the two extra long guns now that you are at the airport? A simple check of airline policies would have prevented this.

PROPER PACKAGING. I recommend purchasing a high-quality, metal box type of container. I recently had an issue with trying to transport a handgun in a high-quality plastic handgun box. The agent at the ticket counter physically ripped open the box and was able to remove it. This set in motion a series of events that would have made for a good YouTube video. I paid a cabbie $100 to get me to the nearest Walmart and back in under an hour, so my family wouldn't miss their flight. The Walmart clerk was familiar with my predicament, as the airline in question is notorious for being difficult when it comes to firearms containers. I was able to purchase a suitable box, get back to the airport and clear the ticket counter and TSA in less than an hour.

Now here's the scary part. Regarding the plastic box that was deemed unsuitable by the ticketing agent: I had used it to transport handguns on that same airline and others no less than 20 times! This story is a clear example of the issues you can face when trying to transport a firearm.

Also, I'd recommend a gun box with a combination lock on it. That way you don't have to concern yourself with losing a key. If you're over 50 (like me), use a simple number you can remember (that rules out your wedding anniversary). Also, although it's generally not required, use a locking device on the firearm itself that prevents it from chambering a round. Most guns come with one of these when you purchase them.

For ammo, keep it in the original box and place it in a locked box separate from the firearm. Many carriers like it to be in the box you purchased it in. Some airlines limit the number of rounds you can transport by number or weight. Make sure you stay in compliance.

Remember, most airlines would prefer that passengers don't attempt to transport any firearms at all on their aircraft. It's a privilege, not a right. It's best to go into these situations with that frame of mind.

KNOW LOCAL LAWS. Do your homework. The firearm you have in one state may not be legal to possess in another. Furthermore, pay close attention to laws regarding ammunition capacity. In New York you can only have seven rounds in a magazine. Why seven rounds? I don't know. You could be at a public range firing a Ruger 10-22 with its issued 10-rounder and if you load eight rounds in it, you have now broken the law. Many of these laws apply on private property as well. Know the laws at your final destination.

KNOW WHERE TO GO. Oftentimes when checking a firearm, you will bypass the ticket kiosks and go directly to the ticketing counter first to notify the ticketing staff. Verbiage is key here. Avoid saying something like, "I have a gun!" A better option is, "I have a firearm(s) in my baggage that I want to check in." See the difference?

Once you have declared this, be prepared for whatever comes next and be flexible. Some ticketing agents will want to see the firearm; others won't. They will always want you to open the case to put the necessary paperwork in the box. Some will then take the bag and have you wait until they get a clearance phone call from TSA. Others will escort you and your bag to TSA to have it inspected. Recently while flying out of JFK in New York, I stood by until an officer with New York's Port Authority met me at the counter and inspected my firearm.


WOODSMAN'S PAL

Be respectful of these folks too. It's pretty unlikely that you would have an adult beverage prior to going to the ticket counter, but if you are that type of person, it will probably look bad if you are dealing with TSA or a law enforcement agent with alcohol on your breath.



Author Nick Perna had transported firearms in this plastic handgun box over 20 times, but after one ticketing agent deemed it unsuitable, he switched to a metal version.

DON'T CARRY ON. Remember, nothing can go in your carry-on luggage! I have a friend who is from South Korea. He had an errant .223 round in his backpack from a recent law enforcement training exercise in the US. Somehow it made it to South Korea from the US with no problems. When it was discovered in South Korea, it almost created an international incident. I've personally donated more than one pocketknife to the fine folks at the Transportation Security Administration after forgetting to take them out of my carry-on luggage.

Also, be careful when having your range bag double as your carry-on bag. Besides the obvious concern about leaving ammo and weapons inside unintentionally, you also have to be concerned about gunshot residue on the bag itself. Ever see TSA staff swab the outside of a bag with an item similar to an alcohol prep pad? Trust me, they aren't being helpful, trying to clean up a ketchup stain. They're drawing samples to be analyzed for explosives residue. Gunpowder falls into that category.

BE WARY OF STICKY FINGERS. Stuff gets stolen at airports all the time – rental cars, luggage, you name it. That's why almost every airport in the US has a law enforcement agency assigned to work there. Guns get stolen a lot. Do what you can to make your gun case less obvious. Transport handguns in lock boxes inside your normal checked baggage. Record serial numbers of guns you are shipping. When I travel, I take a picture of: A) the firearm serial number; B) the lock box; and C) my luggage. I do this in case I have to file a police report for a lost or stolen firearm. Consider putting a GPS tracker in the lock box. Have your contact info on it too.



What Perna uses now to transport firearms: a high-quality metal box with a combo lock. Given that flying with firearms is a privilege, not a right, "be flexible," he counsels.

Make sure you check inside the lock box to confirm your weapon is there as soon as it comes off the carousel at your final destination. Also, don't fly with expensive guns or family heirlooms if you can avoid it.

Finally, you must weigh the need to be armed after you retrieve your bags with causing a firearms incident at an airport. It can be a potentially disastrous situation if you are seen by someone loading rounds into a magazine or racking a slide to chamber a round. I usually try to do this in a handicap stall in the airport bathroom, but be advised, this is not without its risks either.

Bottom line: When flying with firearms, it will be a bumpy ride, so be prepared for every eventuality.

Next month, in part two of this series, I'll discuss shipping guns through the post office, UPS, FedEx, FFL holders and other avenues. ★


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Author Scott Haugen's father, Jerry, has taken a number of record-class blacktails in his more than 60 years of hunting them. These days, he's content tagging young, great-eating bucks like this one-by-three.

HEADGEAR, SCHMEADGEAR

As the saying goes, 'you can't eat horns,' but you can fill a freezer with tender young bucks, does, cows.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SCOTT HAUGEN

"That's going to be a great-eating buck," my dad muttered as he paused to catch his breath. He'd just made a perfect, one-shot kill on a Columbia blacktail, our favorite deer to hunt.



"He's not a big one, but we've got meat in the freezer," Dad smiled, before continuing up the steep hillside through waist-high ferns.

My dad is 80 years old and for him, deer hunting is all about getting venison. If you're looking to put meat in the freezer, setting your sights on a legal buck versus a trophy-class buck is the place to start, no matter what your age or level of hunting experience.

I CONSIDER CONSISTENTLY taking a mature Columbia blacktail buck to be the toughest deer hunt in North America. The advantages hunters have when seeking young bucks over old wise bucks are many, and it doesn't matter if it's a blacktail, whitetail or mule deer.

Young bucks are not as educated as mature bucks. Young bucks hang out in open habitats more than old bucks do and they're more frequently seen with does in late summer and early fall. Once



If looking to get youth into big game hunting, make it about the meat, not the headgear. Here, the author's son, Kazden Haugen, was elated with this young buck, one he and his family enjoyed eating throughout the winter.

the prerut peaks around mid-October, younger bucks frequent openings even more in order to avoid confrontations with mature bucks that are cruising timber and brushy thickets.

During the prerut – which actually begins as soon as velvet is stripped from the antlers – big bucks cover ground, usually at night, inspecting trails for does in the area. They also size up other bucks in order to know what their competition might be in the coming weeks, when the rut commences in late October. Much of this movement takes place along horizontal ridgelines, where trails are carved vertically into hillsides. These are places hunters will want to look for young bucks in September and early October, as they often bed in openings and atop benches.

Mule deer hunters will also want to pay close attention to timbered edges and sagebrush flats, where younger bucks often hang out. Young muley bucks can also be seen hanging out with does, so search the area carefully once does are located.

Whitetail hunters can never go wrong focusing efforts on river bottoms and farmland fringes. Whitetails, even young bucks, can hunker down in the thickest brush and it doesn't take much to conceal them, so search carefully and don't be afraid to get in there and root them out.

Search for young bucks to bed tight to, and even smack in the middle of, briar patches, Scotch broom thickets, alders, willow thickets and among tall fireweed and grasses. When a young buck beds down, he is very small, so look for parts of the buck, not the whole animal.

YOUNG BUCKS ARE also more active during


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Young bucks are more visible and easier to hunt than older bucks. They're also great-eating, so don't get hung up on chasing big bucks.

the first rains than older bucks typically are, venturing into openings where they'll stay until well after daylight. Young bucks also start moving earlier in the evening than bigger bucks will, especially if air temperatures drop. When the first big fall storm rolls in, hit the woods. Get ahead of the pressure front, for when that barometer drops, deer start moving.

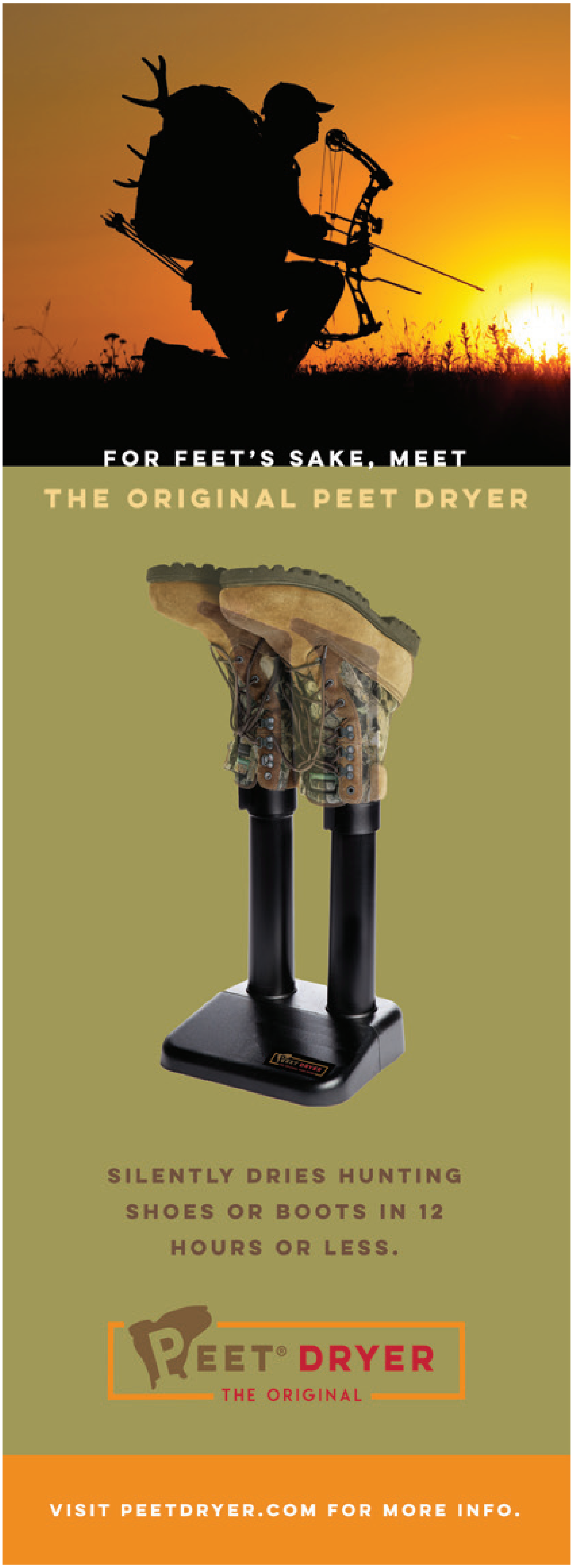
The windier it is, the better, as this often pushes young bucks out of cover. While big bucks hunker down once limbs and trees start falling in high winds, young bucks often panic and head to openings where they can see what's going on. Young bucks don't always have the confidence to trust their bedding areas in these conditions and, fearing predators, often flee to the nearest opening, letting their eyes and nose be their defense since sounds are drowned out.

The morning following a big storm, be in the woods at first light. Young bucks often feed well into the morning after a storm, foraging on mosses and lichens that fell in the night. Likewise, they'll start feeding earlier in the evening on the heels of a storm, especially if dark skies prevail.

The biggest challenge for many deer hunters is simply locating a buck. True, there aren't as many as there were 50 years ago, but there's still a surprising number of deer in the woods. Spend time scouting in the summer months and you'll see exactly what I'm talking about.

WHEN GLASSING FOR deer, again, look for parts of the animal. Search for a horizontal back or belly line, a moist black nose reflecting in the light, a white throat patch or antlers moving or reflecting the sunlight. Devote hours to glassing prime habitat, not minutes. Refrain from driving roads, glassing from the window, then driving away after a few seconds of scanning the country.

Though you're searching for a



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The author's wife, Tiffany Haugen, skins out a cow elk she shot. Cow elk are her favorite-eating big game, and with good reason.

young buck, they're not stupid, and they know staying still is their best camouflage. Get out of the truck, walk to an elevated vantage point, sit down and glass. Using binoculars is great, but using a quality spotting scope is far better. Grid the land, searching for any tiny part of a deer. Often, your presence makes a young buck nervous enough to get up or fidget in its bed, if you sit long enough.

A few seasons ago, I was looking for a big buck I'd caught on trail camera. I ran into a man and his 12-year-old son hunting for a legal buck. When I told them I'd seen nine small bucks that morning, their jaws dropped. They'd not seen a single deer. Then again, they were driving, barely glassing, hoping to find a buck standing along a logging road. It just doesn't happen that way, at least not as often as it used to. Get out of the truck, cover ground, and hunt.

Following a rain, look for fresh tracks and follow them into the brush or timber, keeping the wind in your face. Oftentimes young bucks don't go far before bedding down, often surprisingly close to roads and openings. Walk gated roads that allow it and move slowly and quietly, always searching, as bucks are more active in areas less frequented by humans. Hopping on a mountain bike is a great way to slowly and quietly cover ground behind gated roads that allow non-motorized access. Move quietly and stop frequently to glass the area; often you can catch a young buck by surprise in these lightly pressured sectors.

WHILE GLASSING AND slowly covering ground is effective in September and the first few weeks of October, come the final days of October, things heat up. That's when the rut begins for all deer throughout the West. Rattling can be effective at bringing in young bucks starting in mid-October. Remember, deer are color blind so wear hunter orange or bright red – some states even allow hunter pink – for your safety, especially when using tactics that imitate a buck or doe.

When rattling for young bucks, use a timid sequence. Lightly tickle the ends of the rattling antlers, or rattle bag, together. Avoid hitting the bases or making overly aggressive sounds that will scare a small buck. The goal is to pique a buck's curiosity, making it think two small bucks are sparring. While loud, heavy rattling, raking trees, scraping and kicking the ground can attract mature bucks, these actions will often send a young buck running the other way. Lightly rattle for a minute or so, then watch and listen. After a few minutes, try again, then wait.

If nothing comes in after 10 minutes, move, or rattle slightly louder. I like moving more when rattling for small bucks versus big bucks because the timid sounds simply don't carry far, especially on windy days or in thick timber. Try to find a horizontal ridge that runs for several hundred yards so you can rattle your way along its entirety. This is prime habitat for young bucks.

WHEN IT COMES to putting meat in the freezer, don't limit your thinking to only young bucks. There are many doe hunts as well as cow elk hunts

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throughout the West that yield high success rates. If you've not eaten cow elk, it could be the best of the best venison there is. Likewise, pronghorn doe hunts are plentiful in some states, and taken care of properly, these are excellent-eating animals.

Of course, proper field care is key to maximizing the taste and texture of any big game meat, so be sure you're prepared to quickly break down and cool a big game animal as soon as possible. Before the hunt, make sure you have a pack, knife, sharpener, game bags and a cooler or two with ice, so game can be broken down and the meat cooled. The quicker game meat cools, the more flavorful it will be. Often it's the cook who gets blamed for gamey, tough venison, when in reality, improper field care is largely to blame.

This season, don't get caught up trophy hunting for deer. If a big buck presents an opportunity, great, but if not, so what? Like my grandpa used to say, "You can't eat the horns!" Once you sink your teeth into a young, well taken care of buck that's been properly aged in refrigeration, you'll be glad you punched a tag.

Editor's note: Order signed copies of Scott Haugen's best-selling book Trophy Blacktails: The Science of the Hunt *at scotthaugen.com. Mention you want the ASJ special and receive his popular big game field dressing DVD* free *– a $20 value! Follow Scott on Instagram and Facebook.* ★



After a successful mule deer buck hunt in Texas, the author secured a couple whitetail doe tags, which yielded some great-eating venison.





Author Larry Case calls turkeys while Callie the pointer snoozes on a fall afternoon in the blind.

THE OTHER TURKEY SEASON

A much older tradition than today's popular spring season, pursuing turkeys in the fall woods has its own techniques, rewards.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LARRY CASE

Bo, the big brown pointer and setter cross, came streaking by me at Mach 2. I had been walking on fresh turkey scratching in the leaves for 15 minutes and I knew something was up.

We were deep in a remote section of Forest Service land in southwest Virginia, and things were about to get lively. Just then, a few hundred yards above me, I heard Bo's excited, high-pitched, almost hysterical barking. Next came the heavy, thudding wingbeats of wild turkeys clawing at the air and trying to gain altitude to escape the fleet canine pursuing them.

Wuff, wuff, wuff, came the sound of their wings, and now the equally excited alarm putts of the turkeys that had been rousted from a morning of feeding on white oak acorns. Looking skyward, I saw big, beautiful turkeys with set wings; one here, two farther out, none in shotgun range or I would have tried one.

Bo was now working singles, turkeys that had run off on the ground away from the original flush. He was an old hand at this and would swing back through the flush site, pick up the scent trail of turkey still on the ground, and run it full blast till that bird was airborne, barking every time. I saw or heard at least 10 turkeys take flight from this flock and there was bound to be more.

The young dog we had with us this day came streaking past me, running toward where Bo was barking. He was probably too late to the dance to get in on the action, but he would learn.

Soon I heard the soft footsteps of my partner, and we would have a short briefing on the events of the flush and move on to phase two of the turkey dog operation. We would build a blind near the flush site and start calling, hoping to lure a turkey into gun range. Bo came in, reluctantly, and I petted and praised him and told him he was the best there is.

All was right with the world.

AN ALMOST FORGOTTEN SEASON?

Unfortunately, we now have a generation of turkey hunters who have little or no knowledge of fall hunting. Now to some, that is not a big deal. Most of us are wrapped up in other pursuits, mainly deer-related.

For those unfamiliar with it, fall turkey season has a much older tradition than the spring season. Back in the day, meaning before the 1960s for most states, the spring season did not exist. In much of the Southeast, turkeys were hunted in the fall. There were many more fall hunters than today. Some hunted fall turkeys exclusively, and some people hunted them in connection with small game like squirrels.



The author and Bo the "dropper" – a pointer/setter mix – with a big fall longbeard. (BILL PERSINGER)



A flock of fall gobblers gets ready to leave town as a turkey dog approaches.

Just to be clear, none of this is knocking spring turkey hunting in any way; I spring hunt most days of the season and love it, but fall hunting is just different. Tom Kelly, considered by many as the dean of all turkey hunting authors, once said he liked fall turkey hunting because it was "lively." I would agree.

When you are in the middle of flushing a large flock, with turkeys running, flying and lots of alarm putts sounding, it can be very lively. That flushing thing is the essence of the difference in fall hunting compared to spring. The goal in fall hunting is usually to find the turkeys (this can be quite a task in big country sometimes) and get the flock broken up, separated and as scattered as you can. Now comes the second phase of the fall hunt.

Wild turkeys are by nature very gregarious; they want to stay together in the flock they have been a member of since they came out of the egg. These family groups, usually the hen and the brood she has raised this season, do not like to be separated. If they are scattered well, it is sometimes not long until these turkeys are calling and trying to find each other. (I say sometimes, as it is not a sure thing that the turkeys will say a word.) The turkey hunter will find a spot close to where the flock was scattered, and then hide and call to these turkeys to lure one within gun range. The lonely call of wild turkey heard in big woods is one of the iconic sounds of nature in my book.

BUST 'EM UP AND CALL THEM BACK

Once the turkeys have been scattered (remember, there is a difference between flushed and scattered), it is time for you to find a good place to



Hunters sit quietly in the blind while calling turkeys.



hide and call from. Usually setting up near the flush site is recommended, as theoretically this is where the turkeys will want to regroup. You may sit at the base of a tree, just as you would on a spring hunt. Some fall hunters like to build a quick, impromptu blind by dragging some limbs and other forest material together, and you can add some camo material that you may carry with you. To me, building a blind is part of the fun.

Your vocalizations for calling fall turkeys will be just a little different from those you use in spring. Hen yelps are good most any time, but study up on the assembly call (really just a series of yelps meant to mimic the adult hen calling her brood) and the kee-kee run (a whistling call with yelps done by the young-of-the-year turkeys when they are separated). Don't forget the raspy, croaking yelps of longbeard gobblers.

Calling to old gobblers is quite different than trying to entice young turkeys. Separate some cagey old gobblers some fall afternoon and see if you agree with those who claim fall turkey hunting is "easy."



Case and Smoke the setter with a fall turkey taken near an ancient cabin deep in the West Virginia hills.



Pete Clare, owner of Turkey Trot Acres in upstate New York, with a couple John Byrne turkey dogs. Per the National Wild Turkey Foundation, of the 42 states holding a turkey season this fall, 25 allow the use of dogs.

GONE TO THE DOGS

Now, just how we scatter these turkeys is often the topic of great discussion, and part of the fun. Turkeys can be found and scattered on foot, but it ain't easy, brother. Long ago some enterprising hunters in eastern Virginia started using bird dogs, usually pointers or setters or a mixture of the two (known as a "dropper" in the South), to find and flush turkeys for them. Think about it: turkeys are fleet of foot and hard to find in large tracts of land. The bird dog has a keen nose, a highly developed prey drive (he wants to find game) and most of these dogs are very fast. These big running dogs scour the woodlands, find the scent of a flock of turkeys, follow them and then run into the turkeys, scattering them to the four winds and barking as the turkeys fly.


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Talk about lively!

Now the second phase of the hunt can begin. The hunter finds a good hiding place and may build a quick blind to hide himself and the dog. That's right, the dog sits with the hunter while he is calling. This takes quite a bit of training! Hopefully the turkeys are well flushed and will call and give the hunter a chance to entice one within range. It is quite an experience.

Of course, you don't have to have a dog to hunt turkeys in the fall. Of the few fall hunters who are left out there, many like to ease through the woodlands, calling occasionally, looking for fresh turkey sign and hoping to engage with a flock of birds. Most fall turkey hunters who go it alone figure they need to be in the woods at daylight, hoping to hear a noisy flock of turkeys come off the roost. It is just one way to hunt this uniquely American game bird.

Even though more states have opened a season in recent years, fall turkey hunting is nowhere near as popular as it used to be and that is OK, but maybe you will want to try it some fall afternoon when you get tired of sitting in a tree stand, waiting for a deer to come by. I just hope we don't see it disappear altogether from the hunting scene. It is a time-honored hunting tradition that hopefully will be around for a long time. ★

Editor's note: Larry Case has been a devoted outdoorsman since he was a child. He will admit to an addiction to turkey hunting (spring and fall), but refuses any treatment. He enjoys the company of gobblers and cur dogs that are loud and people who speak the truth softly. Case served 36 years as a game warden in West Virginia and retired with the rank of district captain. You can check out his podcast and other stories at gunsandcornbred.com.

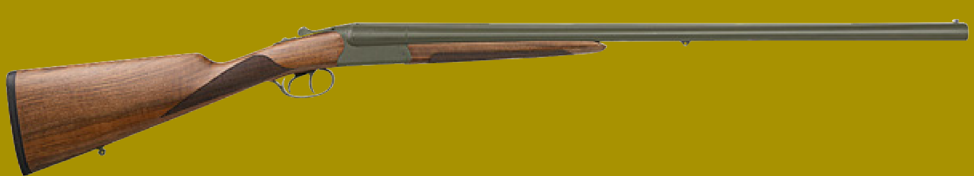
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Author and wilderness deer and elk hunter Jason Brooks describes his Kimber Hunter Pro Desolve Blak in 6.5 Creedmoor as "(an) extremely lightweight rifle that is designed to maximize the cartridge chambering to its fullest potential."



EXCEEDING ALREADY HI

Well known for super-lightweight, accurate hunting rifles, Kimber has outdone itself with the new Hunter

Kimber is known for its extremely lightweight and accurate rifles. Machined to tight tolerances, assembled and completely built in the USA, Kimber rifles are carried into the backcountry each fall by hunters who want a rifle that shoots well but doesn't weigh down the pack.

The Alabama company was founded in 1979 and has become an industry leader with a reputation for benchrest accuracy, comfort and quality construction of their firearms. For 2021, they added the Hunter Pro Desolve Blak to the Mountain series of rifles. It is one of the lightest production rifles on the market that is budget-friendly. This rifle is currently chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor, .308 Winchester and .280 Ackley Improved. The rifle is 41¼ inches overall and the Creedmoor and .308 versions weigh only 5 pounds, 7 ounces, while the .280 Ackley is 43¾ inches and 5 pounds, 12 ounces.



GH RIFLE STANDARDS

Pro Desolve Blak.

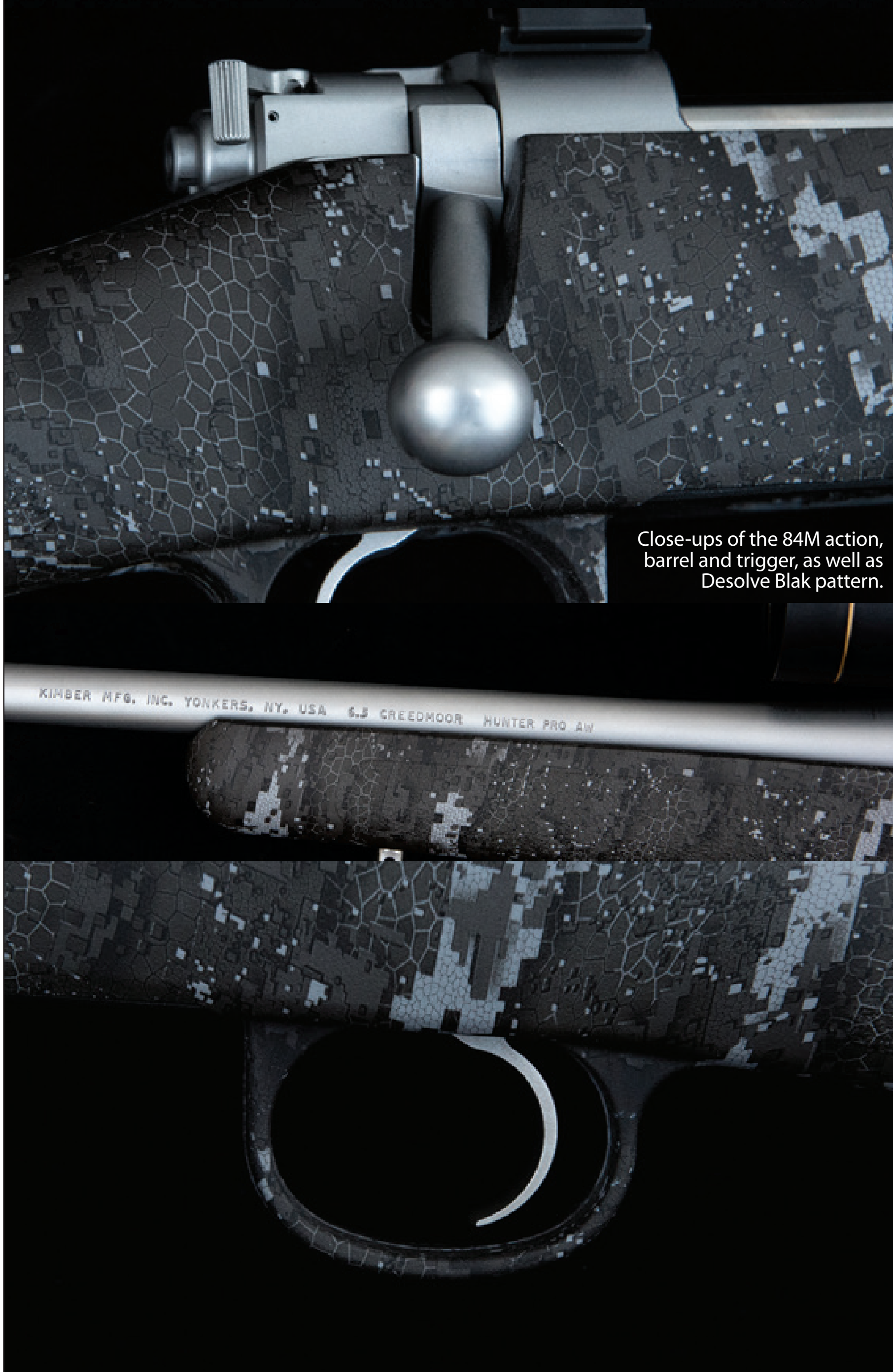
PART II OF III ON LIGHTWEIGHT HUNTING RIFLES • STORY AND PHOTOS BY JASON BROOKS

ACTION: The rifle is an 84M bolt-action that has tight tolerances and virtually no "slop" when you lift the bolt knob. It has a Mauser claw extractor and a three-position Model 70-style safety. Sliding the bolt both backwards and forwards is smooth, with virtually no lateral movement. The design of the bolt is to reduce weight; in fact, everything about this rifle is designed to reduce weight while maximizing the machined accuracy of the rifle to its fullest potential. At the top of the action are predrilled and tapped holes to mount the scope bases.

BARREL: The .280 Ackley Improved is a long action and comes with a 24-inch barrel, while the short-action .308 and 6.5 Creedmoor are available with a 22-inch barrel. All of the barrels are pencil-thin to reduce weight. Each rifle also comes with a muzzle brake that is threaded on and a thread protector if you choose to remove the brake. For me, the muzzle brake is a must when it comes



The rifle also comes chambered in .308 Winchester and .280 Ackley Improved. The .308 and Creedmoor versions are slightly shorter and lighter than the third, but all weigh under 6 pounds.



Close-ups of the 84M action, barrel and trigger, as well as Desolve Blak pattern.

to a super-lightweight rifle. The chamber is match-grade, making for an extremely accurate rifle, and the barrel is mounted with a pillar block that helps accuracy. It is guaranteed to have a sub-MOA right out of the box.

STOCK: The stock is fiber-reinforced polymer in Desolve Blak pattern, which is a digitized grey splatter that accents the rifle well. It is extremely lightweight and tough, resisting scratching and comfortable to grip. It also tends to be "non-slip," which helps when you use a rest to shoot the rifle, as it grips the rifle and helps you hold it steady. The rifle comes with a 1-inch recoil pad and the total length of pull is 13.75 inches.

TRIGGER: When it comes to shooting a lightweight rifle accurately, one of the most influential factors is the trigger. Since the rifle is so light, any pressure on the rifle causes it to move and that decreases accuracy. Kimber knows this, which is why the factory trigger is adjustable. The assembly is easily removed and two set screws adjust the length of travel and the pull weight. When you get the rifle from the factory, it comes with the trigger pull set to between 3.5 and 4 pounds and no travel in the trigger. You can adjust this yourself if you feel the need, but be sure to stay within recommended tolerances. A quarter to half a turn on the set screw will lighten the trigger significantly, but I found it wasn't necessary on this rifle.

SAFETY: Kimber uses a three-position Model 70-style safety. The safety



You may not want to take off-hand shots with the rifle, but from a steady rest and when topped with good optics, "this is one of the best and lightest rifles on the market today" for backcountry hunters, states Brooks.

locks forward once the rifle is fired, which is a reminder that the rifle has a spent case in the chamber. The three positions allow you to keep the rifle in the "safe" position and able to work the bolt to unload the rifle. It has a fairly large flange that is textured and is easy to use, even when wearing thick gloves for those late-season hunts.

MAGAZINE: Unlike Kimber's Mountain Ascent series, the Hunter Pro Desolve Blak comes with a detachable box magazine. This is a nice bonus feature, as it is quick to unload and makes it easy to carry extra ammunition that's ready to go in magazines. The magazines themselves are once again designed with weight in mind, as they are constructed of polymer and metal, and they hold three rounds of ammo.

MUZZLE BRAKE: Thankfully Kimber has made the muzzle brake part of the package instead of an add-on. This is an extremely lightweight rifle and recoil is not fun to shoot. But the muzzle brake takes a lot of the felt recoil out of the rifle. It does add to the increased noise and hearing protection is a must, even when hunting. If you decide you don't want to use the muzzle brake, then you can simply unscrew it from the end of the barrel and put on the thread protector that is included. The model I have is in 6.5 Creedmoor and though a muzzle brake isn't necessary, it really helps stay on target for follow-up shots if needed. Even in this mild caliber, the rifle tends to jump a bit since it is so lightweight.

PERFORMANCE: Like my other Kimbers, and even a few other lightweight rifles I own, the Hunter Pro Desolve Blak is made to be carried easily afield. One of the main differences between Kimber rifles and other rifles I own that are sub-6 pounds is the accuracy and increased ballistics. The longer barrel that Kimber offers for such a light rifle allows the full potential of the cartridge. The length of the barrel has two main influences when it comes to accuracy and performance. The first is that the longer the barrel, the less "off center" the projectile is when it leaves the barrel if you happen to flinch or



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move just slightly. The second thing is pressure build-up. As a cartridge is fired and the powder burns, it creates an increased pressure of gasses that pushes the bullet down the barrel. Once the bullet leaves the barrel, it is no longer being pushed. The more travel or time the bullet is in the barrel, the faster the bullet accelerates, which means the long barrel increases the bullet speed compared to a shorter barrel. With very tight machined tolerances, the long barrel, quality trigger and pillar bedding, the Kimber Hunter Pro Desolve Blak is guaranteed sub-MOA accuracy with quality commercial ammo.

THE TEST: Just like with any new rifle, the first thing I do is clean it. I remove the bolt and wipe it down with a solvent, run a few patches down the barrel and work the action once it is all assembled. This is an operational function testing to make sure everything is in working order. A Leupold VI in 3-9x40 matched the rifle and caliber very well. Three cartridges were loaded into the magazine and from there the rifle was placed on a shooting rest. The trigger didn't need any adjusting and the rifle fired without issue. Cycling the 6.5 Creedmoor was relatively easy with no feeding problems occurring. Accuracy was better than I could shoot the rifle, meaning off of a bench and wearing proper safety equipment such as hearing protection and shooting glasses, the rifle shot extremely accurately. Replicating these conditions during hunting is impossible, but knowing the rifle shoots tight groups means that if I miss, then it is my fault and nothing to do with the rifle.

BOTTOM LINE: Kimber makes high-quality firearms and the Hunter Pro Desolve Blak, with a price point almost unheard of for a rifle built this well and lightweight, exceeds even their great gunmaking standards. Unlike other companies that produce dozens of rifles or more at a time, Kimber runs each rifle through tight tolerance inspections and it shows. An extremely lightweight rifle that is designed to maximize the cartridge chambering to its fullest potential, it will be hard to beat the Hunter Pro Desolve Blak for a backcountry hunt.

The only drawback is that the rifle can be too light when it comes to high-stress off-hand shooting. But this is something the hunter needs to realize and be willing to accept. The rifle will not make a good whitetail "deer drive" gun, as it should be fired from a steady rest. And if you take the time to set up for the shot, you will know that the rifle is more than capable of making it count. For the backcountry hunter, this is one of the best and lightest rifles on the market today. ★


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The solid bullet is designed for penetrating thick hide and heavy bone.

SOLID PERFORMERS

When you're hunting dangerous game, these are the best bullets for the job.

STORY BY PHIL MASSARO • PHOTOS BY MASSARO MEDIA GROUP

The buffalo bull took the premium softpoint bullet on the point of his shoulder, shredding the top of the heart and lungs, but as is the way with the Cape buffalo, no one told him it was time to die. Sometimes they just don't read the script. The followup shot was at a raking angle, entering just in front of the right rear leg and exiting just in front of the left foreleg, putting the bull down for good.



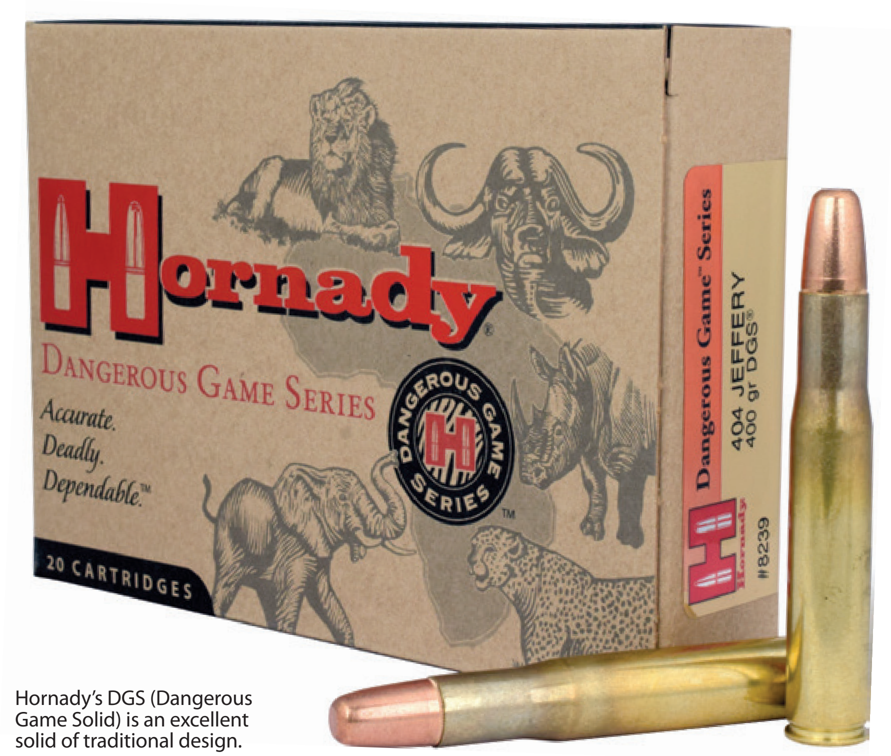
That second bullet was what is commonly referred to as a "solid," in that the projectile is designed for the deep penetration needed to reach the vital organs from any angle, though there is no expansion. These projectiles are generally reserved for hunting the biggest game on Earth, including the true pachyderms like elephant, hippopotamus and giraffe. They are also employed to handle the very small antelope species like Sharpe's grysbok, duiker and suni when using a big bore rifle, in order to prevent excessive meat and pelt damage, as would be caused by a softpoint bullet.

These bullets have many names, from "full patch" to "total metal jacket" to "full metal jacket," though the "solid" moniker is most common. While most bullets are technically solid, with the exception of the hollowpoints, the solids we most often refer to are engineered to maintain their shape for reliably straight-line penetration, as opposed to the expanding softpoints, which increase their diameter upon impact to maximize soft tissue damage. The solids are a perfect means of getting through thick hide and tough shoulder bones, as well as the porous, honeycombed bone of an elephant's skull.

The earliest solids were simply a copper jacket over a steel inner jacket and lead core; the jacket would completely cover the lead core at the nose and sides, leaving the core exposed at the base. While these designs

assuredly gave better penetration than that of their pure lead- and copper-jacketed softpoint counterparts, they were prone to bending when striking hard bone, and sometimes changing course radically. When recovered, these older designs would squeeze the lead core out the bottom of the bullet when put under extreme pressures; one can only imagine the terror of placing a solid in the correct spot on a mature bull elephant only to find that the bullet failed to reach the brain because the bullet bent. Still, the penetrative qualities of these bullets were vastly superior to those of the softpoints of the era.

Like so many of our bullet designs, modern solids are leaps and bounds ahead of the technology available just three decades ago. The modern solid is, more often than not, a monolithic design and free of lead. These projectiles are usually constructed of copper or a copper



Hornady's DGS (Dangerous Game Solid) is an excellent solid of traditional design.



The Woodleigh FMJ shares a similar profile to the Woodleigh Weldcore to give the same point of impact.



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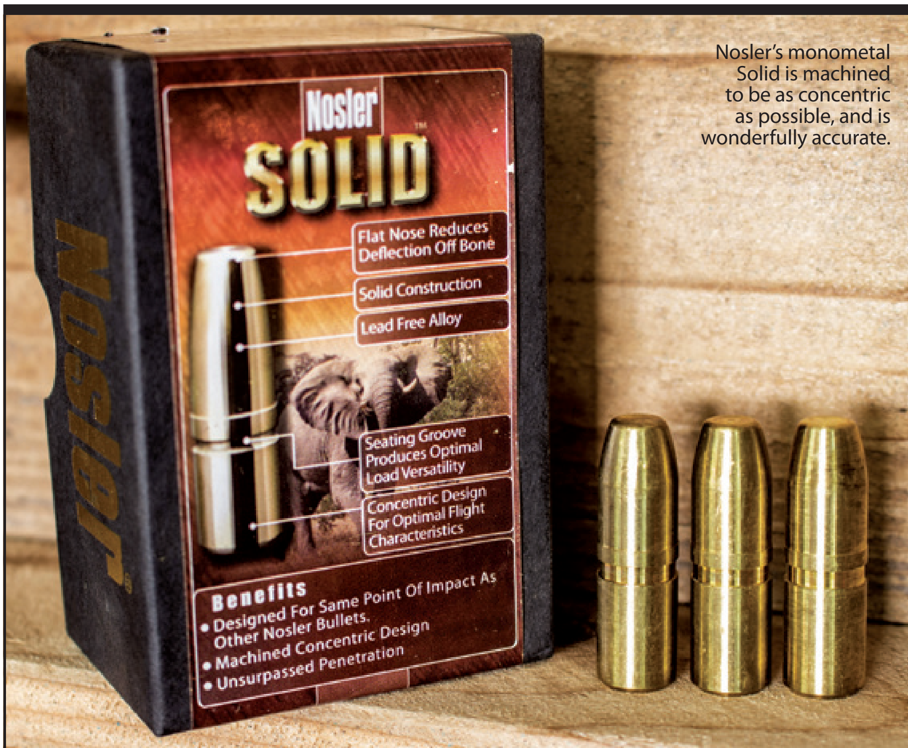
Using a thin copper jacket over a thick steel core, the Hornady DGS gives excellent penetration, making it a great choice for backup shots on buffalo or for primary shots on elephant.

alloy, and will feature a hemispheric or squared meplat, depending on brand. The meplats have been specifically engineered to deliver the maximum penetration, and in some instances will offer the slightest bit of expansion at the nose in order to give a larger wound channel. Let's take a look at the various solid bullets available in both loaded and component form to see the pros and cons of the different designs.

CONVENTIONAL SOLIDS

Conventional solid designs include the Hornady DGS (Dangerous Game Solid) and the Woodleigh FMJ, as is loaded in Norma's African PH line of ammunition. Both are available in component and loaded form, and both are strong designs among the conventional solid bullets. They use a thin copper layer over a thick steel jacket to resist deformation, and both of these bullets have proven


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Nosler's monometal Solid is machined to be as concentric as possible, and is wonderfully accurate.

themselves to be utterly reliable.

Where the Hornady DGS has a flat meplat and shares the same profile as the softpoint DGX Bonded, the Woodleigh FMJ is designed to mimic the profile of the old Kynoch ammunition, used to regulate a very large number of double rifles over the last century. Both bullets keep their weight forward, and both give excellent field results.

There are some who feel that the steel-jacketed solids can be terrible for your rifle's barrel, as the steel doesn't have the "give" that a copper-coated lead-core bullet possesses, and will cause undue stress on the barrel. I haven't personally seen this phenomenon, but I know folks who've insisted that these copper-coated steel bullets accelerate barrel wear.

MONOLITHIC SOLIDS

These are a definite step up from the conventional solids, as their monometal construction prevents the possibility of bullet separation; there is nothing to come apart. Among my favorite designs in this category are the Barnes Banded Solid, the Nosler Solid, the Peregrine VRG-2 copper solid, the Cutting Edge Bullets Safari Solid, and Federal's Trophy Bonded Sledgehammer. The good old A-Square Monolithic Solids should also be included, if you can still find any.

Some designs use a hemispherical nose profile – like certain calibers of the Barnes Banded Solid, and the A-Square Monolithic Solids – but the majority use a flat meplat, as this seems to aid in straight-line penetration. That flat nose might not feed as well as the roundnose bullets, but the terminal performance is a definite improvement. Peregrine's VRG-2 has the same exact profile as their excellent flatnosed and boattailed VRG-3 BushMaster softpoint, and will certainly hit to the same point of impact. Nosler's Solid also uses a flat nose to resist deflection when those huge bones are hit, and are utterly reliable. The Cutting Edge Safari Solid features their BBW No. 13 nose profile, and has shown to have fantastic penetrative qualities. South Africa's Dzombo solids – which are offered in heavy-for-caliber – have a good number of grooves cut into the



Cutting Edge Bullets Safari Solids – shown here in .423-inch-diameter for the .404 Jeffery – are machined with their BBW No. 13 nose profile for the best penetration. Note the bands, which will engage the rifling.



The Barnes Banded Solid has a round ogive for easy feeding, yet a flat meplat for optimum penetration.



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South Africa's Dzombo solids are long and heavy for caliber, giving the penetration needed to stop a dangerous game animal when it needs to be stopped.



The Federal Premium Trophy Bonded Sledgehammer – with the signature "T" at the meplat – is among the author's favorite choices for a solid.

shank of the bullet to reduce pressure and fouling simultaneously, and will certainly penetrate.

Perhaps my favorite of the lot, the Federal Trophy Bonded Sledgehammer solid uses a flat meplat with the trademark "T" on the nose. They are wonderfully accurate in my Heym Model 89B double, and on a safari in the Chirisa block of Zimbabwe, I used



Author Phil Massaro took this Zimbabwean Cape buffalo bull in the Chirisa block with his Heym double rifle loaded with Trophy Bonded Sledgehammers.



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The Xtreme Defender is based on the popular Xtreme Penetrator product line. The XD ammunition has an optimized nose flute, total weight, and velocity to achieve a penetration depth up to 18 inches* with a permanent wound cavity (PWC) that is just simply enormous; no other expanding hollowpoint comes close to achieving anywhere near this diameter and volume. Not only is the PWC over 100% larger than any other expanding bullet, expansion is achieved despite being shot through barriers. The solid copper body ensures that wallboard, sheet metal, and automotive glass will have no effect on the PWC.

<u>*Falling within FBI guidelines</u>
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This Australian water buffalo was taken with a Heym 89B double rifle in .470 NE and 500-grain North Fork Cup Point solids.



The North Fork Cup Point solid has a small dish at the nose to give the slightest bit of expansion, in addition to deep penetration.

them to finish a wounded buffalo at 185 yards across the Sengwa sand river, shooting the big gun offhand. Even at that distance, the Sledgehammer solid penetrated the buffalo's body, putting him down for good. Federal loads these bullets in their Premium Safari ammo line, and they are an excellent choice for backup on any thick-skinned animal.

EXPANDING SOLIDS

This category contains a pair of excellent solids: the North Fork Cup Point solid and the Woodleigh Hydrostatically Stabilized Solid. The former is a monometal solid with a small dish that gives a small amount of expansion, while still giving the deep, straight-line penetration required for reaching the vitals of a truly big game animal. I used this bullet in the .470 NE at 500 grains to take an enormous



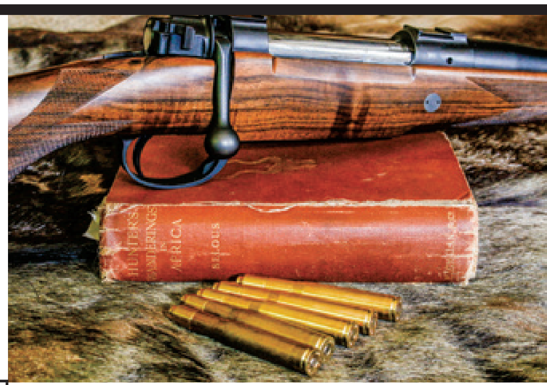
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Asiatic water buffalo in Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia, at a mere 17 yards. They shoot wonderfully, and they are a sound choice for any thick-skinned dangerous game. The small grooves on the shank of the bullet not only seal the gases but take the rifling perfectly, making the North Fork one of the best premium bullets out there. They are currently being produced once again in Sweden.

Woodleigh's Hydrostatically Stabilized Solid is probably my personal choice for the one bullet that can – quite literally – do it all. I've used it to take game ranging in size from warthogs and diminutive reedbuck all the way up to Cape buffalo and elephant, and it has never let me down. Woodleigh has engineered a small cup at the nose that

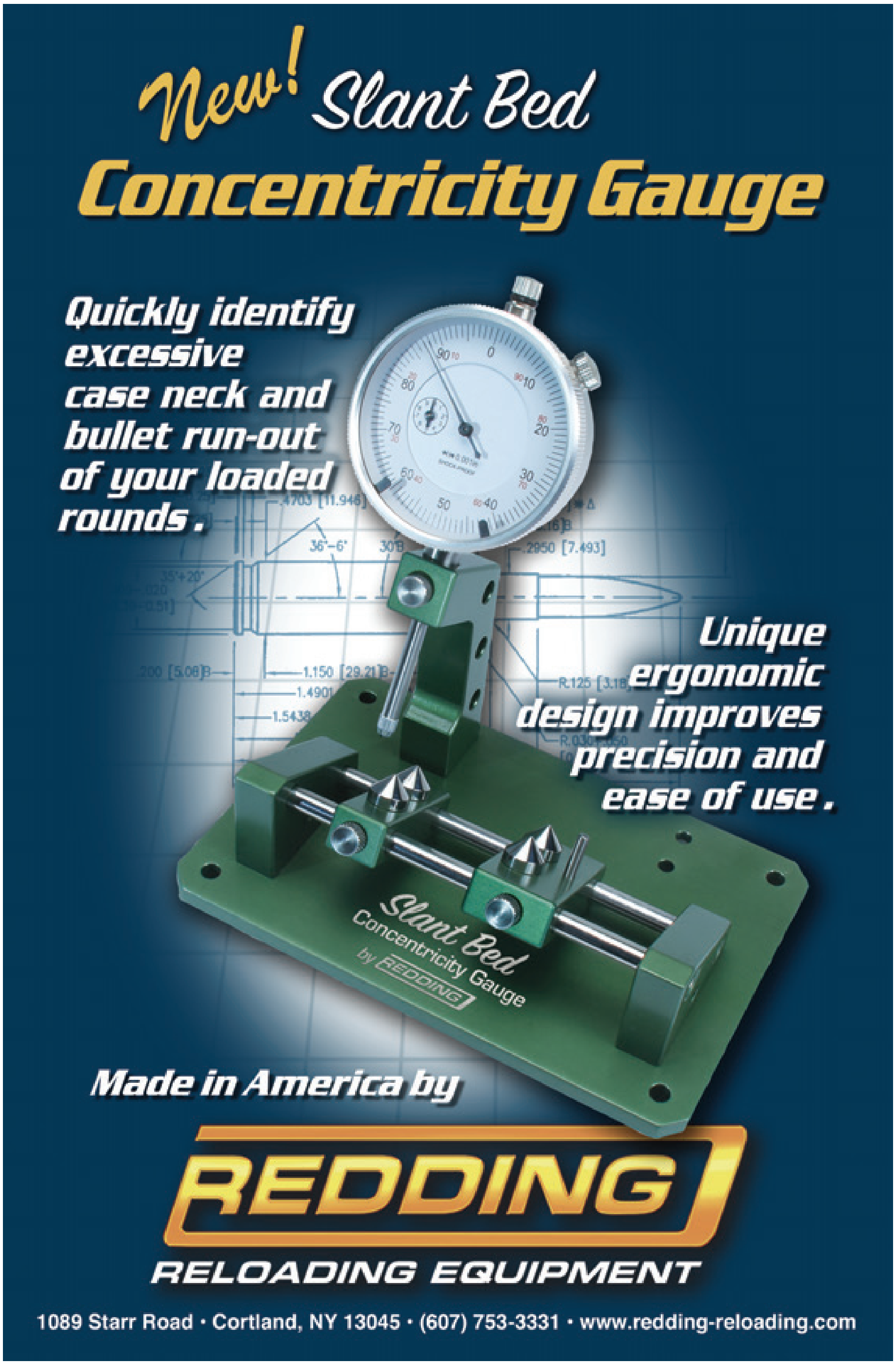

The author handloads 400-grain Woodleigh Hydros in his Heym Express .404 Jeffery with excellent results.

creates a cavitation bubble, destroying blood-rich tissue in a cylinder 8 to 12 inches in diameter, centered on the bullet's path. This devastates heart, lungs and other vital organs. The Hydro is sometimes mated with a round plastic cap – to help the ammo feed better – which breaks off upon impact. It is available in component form, as well as loaded by Federal in the Premium Safari ammo line. Were I ever forced to walk the breadth of Africa in bush country, the Hydro would be my bullet of choice, whether in my .404 Jeffery, .416 Remington Magnum or .470 Nitro Express.

Swift's Breakaway Solids offer a similar idea, with a polymer nose designed for ease of feeding in a bolt-action repeater, and a slightly dished nose profile to give the cavitation effect. While

Massaro took this elephant bull in Zimbabwe with a Heym .404 Jeffery and 400-grain Woodleigh Hydro Solids.







Swift's Breakaway Solids have a rounded polymer nose to aid in feeding and which breaks off upon impact.

I've yet to use these on game – they've been fantastic on paper, with all the accuracy you could ask for – my friends and colleagues who have taken them afield have nothing but praise for them.

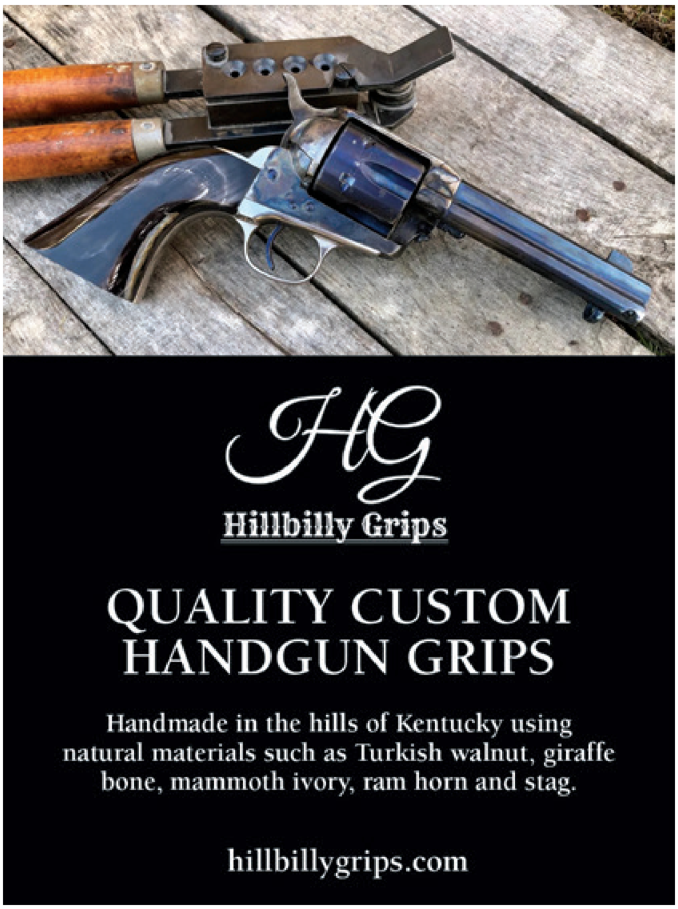
The choice of a solid bullet for your hunting scenario can often depend on which bullet/load shoots best in your rifle, especially in comparison to the point of impact of your chosen softpoint. If you have the honor of shooting a vintage double rifle or bolt gun, the monometal bullets can pose an issue with the softer steel of yesteryear; in some instances you can actually see a shadowy imprint of the rifling on the outside of the barrel. If this is the case, shoot a lead-core solid to best preserve your vintage barrel. But if you have a modern rifle with modern alloys, go forth and choose one of the monometals confidently. When you pursue the animals that require a solid bullet, you want the best gear available. ★

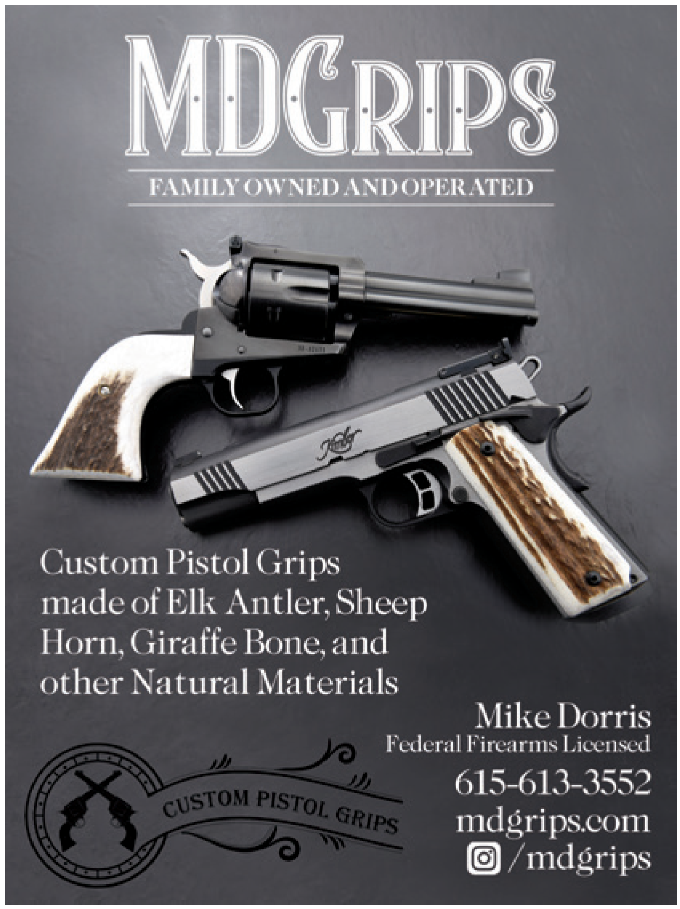

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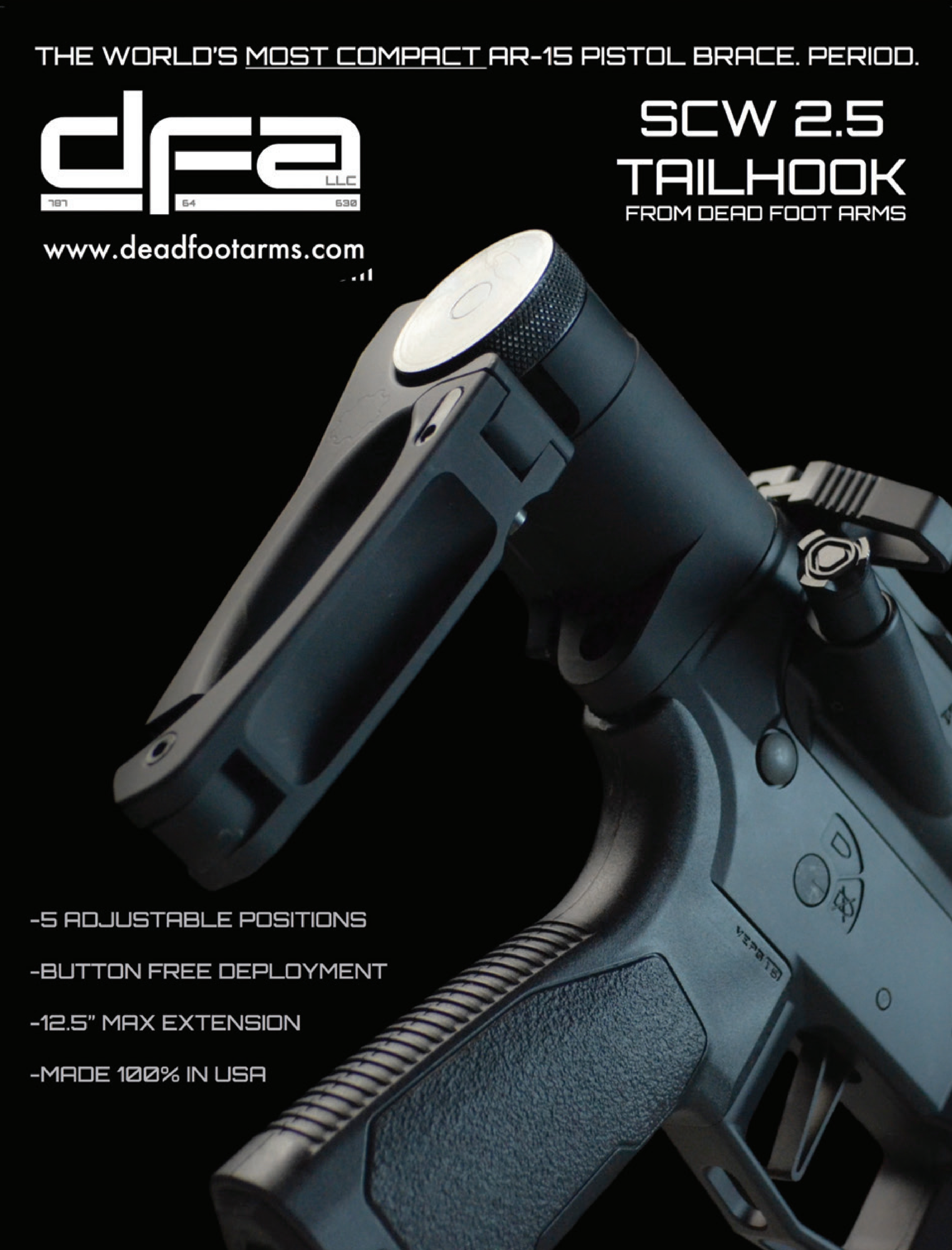
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Anarchy Outdoors of northern Utah offers precision shooters, hunters and others everything from grips and bolt knobs to scopes, barrels and much more.

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Anarchy Outdoors, 'go-to supplier for demanding shooters who want best-in-class function, feel, aesthetics.'

PHOTOS BY ANARCHY OUTDOORS

In 2015, Aaron Gines' lifelong friend Kurt Hansen reached out with the crazy idea and invitation to step into the realm of entrepreneurship. As always, Gines responded with "Let's do this." Later that year, Gines was introduced to the world of precision long-range shooting, and fate compelled him to pick up a Ruger Precision Rifle. This is where the Anarchy Outdoors story begins.

As Gines' skills in long-range precision shooting grew, so did his desire to improve his rifle. In his search for aftermarket precision upgrades for the Ruger Precision Rifle, he found the market was severely lacking. This led straight to Anarchy Outdoors finding its niche in the precision rifle industry.

Relying on their personal experience in the industry, Gines and Hansen realized there was a lack of new products to help hunters, competitive shooters and outdoorsmen, so they developed products that they loved and that the industry needed. Thanks to the duo's innovation, Anarchy Outdoors has become a leader in the firearm accessory industry.

Anarchy Outdoors is the go-to supplier for demanding shooters who want best-in-class function, feel and aesthetics when it comes to their firearms. All accessories are made in-house by field and range professionals. They follow the golden stamp of approval: "If we don't use it, we won't sell it." Anarchy Outdoors offers enhanced products for most firearms brands you find in your local gun shop, including Ruger, Savage, Thompson Center, Tikka, Bergara, Remington,



The company's Tuxedo Precision Rifle Grip incorporates input from competitive shooters, law enforcement and others and is a more ergonomic option than typically found on ARs. It's available in black, olive drab green and flat dark earth.

Browning, Winchester and more. Additionally, Anarchy Outdoors is rated 5 stars on Google from hundreds of customers because of their stellar attention to client needs and a passion for delivering cutting-edge gear for all firearm enthusiasts.

The Tuxedo Precision Rifle Grip, a customer favorite, delivers nothing less than satisfaction. During the development of this product, Anarchy Outdoors incorporated feedback from professional competition shooters, law enforcement officers and ex-military marksmen. Precision rifle shooters require a different grip than typically found on an AR. The Tuxedo Grip accommodates these needs with its 90-degree vertical design and thumb shelf for the shooter to rest their thumb on the strong side of the grip. These features reduce shooter fatigue, facilitate getting the rifle situated into position, and are more ergonomic for the shooter by reducing the amount of bend in the wrist while using the grip.

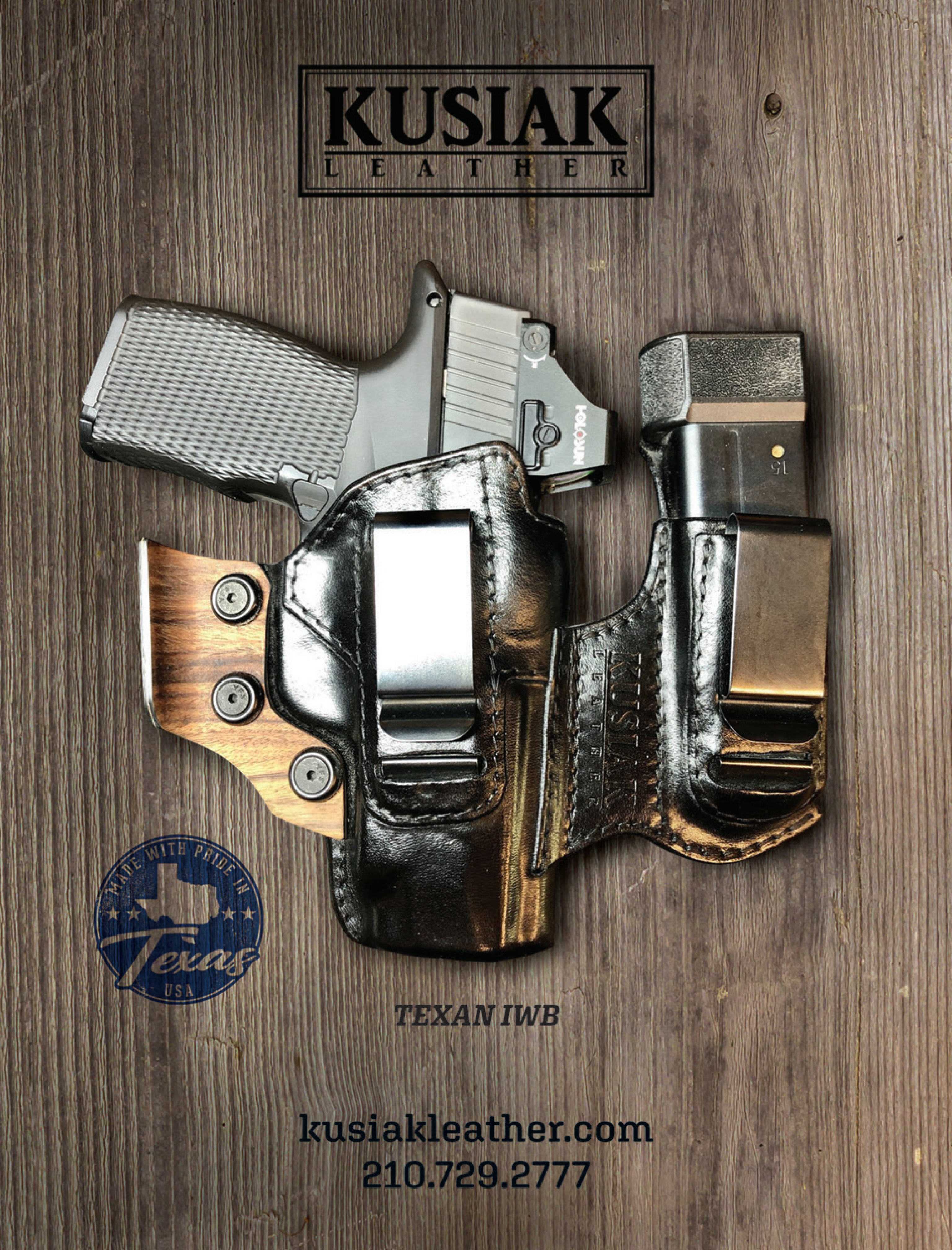


Anarchy Outdoors features a lifetime warranty on products it manufactures.

Other ergonomically correct features include a palm swell that helps control the rifle during positional movement and a palm shelf to reduce fatigue by supporting the hand with a relaxed grip while behind the rifle. The overall shape and dimensions allow proper alignment of the index finger to help with a precise and repeatable trigger pull. The Tuxedo is made from durable Nylon 12 polymer that is resistant to most solvents and chemicals.

Offering a wide variety of precision products made of the highest-quality materials and backed by a lifetime warranty, Anarchy Outdoors stands by every product they sell. ★

Editor's note: See the company's product lineup at anarchyoutdoors.com.


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‘SAY HER NAME LEST SHE BE FORGOTTEN’

Chicago Officer Ella French gunned down in the line of duty.

STORY BY NICK PERNA • COURTESY PHOTOS

You learn early on in law enforcement not to take anything for granted. Every day at work, officers watch life transition to death in real time, up close and personal.



Shootings, stabbings, car crashes, suicides. Violent deaths are the norm when working the streets, a bloody process that plays out over and over again throughout one’s career.

As you observe one bloody scene after another, you realize that you too are on the inevitable path to death. Sadly, for cops, this can come early in their careers, when they have barely had a chance to experience life.

Ambush attacks on police have become all too commonplace in society. Spurred on by the current wave of cop hatred generated by politicians, athletes and celebrities, criminals commit horrendous acts of violence against law enforcement. They are attacked in their patrol cars, while eating in restaurants, even in their homes.

Sometimes, an officer is just doing their job when they are suddenly attacked, like in the case of Ella French. I wouldn’t be too surprised if you haven’t heard of her. The media chooses to ignore or minimize stories like hers in favor of those involving officers using force against violent criminals.



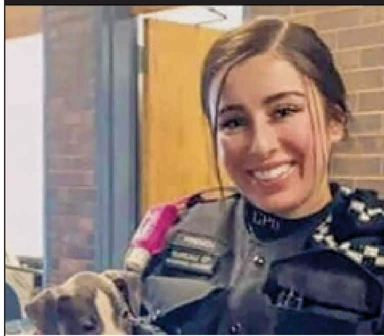
Chicago Police Department Officer Ella French, 29, served the Windy City for three years.

ELLA FRENCH WAS an officer with the Chicago Police Department. She had been on the job for just a little over three years. Last month, the 29-year-old officer was conducting a traffic stop, along with two other CPD officers. As she approached, a passenger in the vehicle produced a handgun. He fired it at Officer French, striking her in the head and killing her. One of her partners, Officer Carlos Yanez, was severely wounded.

Two brothers, Emonte Morgan, 21, and Eric Morgan, 22, have since been arrested and charged. Both are convicted felons, prohibited from even possessing firearms. The motive is unknown at this time. Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, attempted a public relations stunt by showing up at the hospital where French had been taken. When she arrived, CPD officers en masse did an about-face and turned their backs to her, a symbolic response to local politicians turning their back on them time and time again. PR fail.

Chicago is a microcosm of everything that is wrong in America. Liberal politicians defunding and hobbling law enforcement, all the while encouraging criminals to express their feelings through violence towards the police. Unfortunately, in the Windy City, there was no doubt that something like this was going to happen. It was just a question of when. Already the politicos are blaming guns for French’s death. Never mind the Morgan brothers, dark-hearted felons who only understand violence.

There are those who say, “That’s what



they signed up for." We who wear the badge understand that the job is risky and every day that you get to go home is a good day. That being said, the tacit consent from politicians and others that allows these types of horrific violent acts is not what we signed up for.

The number of officers who have been killed in ambushes in recent years is astronomical. You'll have to dig deep to find their names, though; for the most part, they have been forgotten, except by their families, friends and fellow cops.

In Native American culture, it is believed that a soul exists as long as people remember them. So say her name, Ella French, lest she be forgotten. ★

Editor's note: Author Nick Perna is a sergeant with the Redwood City Police Department in northern California. He previously served as a paratrooper in the US Army and is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He also has a master's degree from the University of San Francisco. He is a frequent contributor to multiple print and online forums on topics related to law enforcement, firearms, tactics and veterans issues.



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COMMON DENOMINATORS OF SELF-DEFENSE TRAINING

From mindset to situational awareness, mental to physical health, here's what it boils down to.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PAUL PAWELA

When it comes to self-defense training, there are many different philosophies, some dating back thousands of years. But ultimately, the outcome of any encounter is determined by who is better prepared, who is better skilled, who has the strongest resolve, and who has the better training. In short, it's about mental and physical toughness.



The late Jeff Cooper, known as the father of modern pistol craft, has many books on the subject. In *Principles of Personal Defense*, he asserts that the most important means of surviving a lethal confrontation is neither the weapon nor the battle skills. The primary tool is the combat mindset.

Cooper came up with a color code identifying the four levels of awareness: white (unaware and unprepared), yellow (relaxed alert), orange (specific alert), and red (ready to use lethal force). The color code helps one "think" in a fight. As the level of danger increases, one's willingness to take certain actions increases.

ANOTHER SELF-DEFENSE EXPERT is Jocko Willink, a former lieutenant commander of SEAL Team Three, a Silver Star recipient, an author and a black belt in Brazilian jiu-jitsu. In the foreword of the new book *Breathe: A Life in Flow*



The outcome of any self-defense situation "is determined by who is better prepared, who is better skilled, who has the strongest resolve, and who has the better training," writes author Paul Pawela.



Along with learning hand-to-hand combat tactics, weapons training is a must for building a complete body of self-defense skills.

by Rickson Gracie, Willink writes: "The principles of jiu-jitsu (considered by many to be the best self-defense fighting system in the world) can be applied to every endeavor in life."

Some of these principles, according to Willink, include:

• You have to stay calm when you are in bad situations.

• You need to cover and conceal your intent with other maneuvers.

• You need to utilize the simplest and most effective methods.

• You need to prioritize your focus effort.

• You need to train until you trust yourself to move intuitively, without having to think.

• You cannot let your emotions drive your decisions.

• You have to establish a good base foundation to build upon.

• You have to continuously learn new techniques while reinforcing the fundamentals.

• You have to adapt your plan if circumstances change.

Jiu-jitsu follows a disciplined code of conduct but also encourages a free and open mind, which in turn gives the individual staying power, helps in overcoming fears and helps give self-confidence. Confidence turns into courage, which then leads to honor, strength, pride and ultimately to the power of forgiveness. This is the warrior way.

Finally, here is Master of Arms and top-tier tactical instructor Ernest Emerson on the subject: "Man is still the universal common denominator in all combat. And more to the point, no matter what the evolutionary sophistication of weapons and their means of delivery become, there is and always will be the need to face the rigors, the danger, the reality and the finality of man-to-man combat. Whether it be facing an armed intruder in your home, an active shooter, in a robbery or a terrorist hiding in the next room, the need for an individual civilian, a police officer or a soldier to be willing to fight tooth and nail against an evil entity, cloaked in the guise of a fellow human being, will remain with us as long as man continues to walk the planet."

THE TOPIC OF self-defense training is ultimately a matter of life and death, and no subject deserves more attention to detail.

The first rule of thumb is to have mental fitness and to decide what means the most to you in life. Who and what would you be willing to fight and possibly die for, if need be?

Second is physical fitness. Push yourself to the ultimate limits so that you are in the best shape possible. Look at the all-time greatest fighters – Bruce Lee, Joe Lewis, Chuck Norris, Rickson Gracie, Mike Tyson, and especially our Special Forces soldiers – and see what kind of shape they are in.

Get both empty hands training (including boxing and grappling) and weapons training (edged weapons,

handguns, shotguns and carbines). First aid and driving skills should be implemented, as well as a thorough understanding of the laws of judicious use of deadly force.

None of these concepts are new. In the earliest formation of our country, it was considered negligent by law to go about your daily business unarmed (or untrained). Self-protection was not just a personal responsibility; it was the duty of the community.

The founding fathers included the Second Amendment in the Bill of Rights for three main reasons: 1) self-protection, 2) community protection, and 3) protection from government tyranny, both foreign and domestic.

This is why we train! So, as my mentor Ernest Emerson says, "Train like a mad man and fight like a demon!"

And that is my two cents. ★

Editor's note: For realistic self-defense training, see assaultcountertactics.com. Author Paul Pawela is a nationally recognized firearms and self-defense expert.



"As my mentor Ernest Emerson says, 'Train like a mad man and fight like a demon!'" states Pawela, right.


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www.triadholsters.com

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Crossdraw Holster is designed for gun owners who prefer a dedicated cross-draw-style carry. The open-top design allows for easy draw and features an adjustable tension screw that ensures proper gun retention. Made in the USA with premium vegetable-tanned leather and heavy nylon stitching. MSRP: $53.

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HUNTER COMPANY LEATHER

Fits most small- and medium-frame firearms and made with American full-grain leather. The 4700-style holsters are handcrafted to hug your hip comfortably and fit universally so that one size fits most. It is available in two-tone color and black, and is handcrafted with durable nylon stitching, metal belt clip and metal screw set (for small frames) to adjust to different firearms. Designed for an all-day, everyday carry for both left- and right-handed users. Two sizes are available: 4700, which fits medium to large frame; and 4700S, which fits small frame.

www.huntercompany.com



KUSIAK LEATHER

Kusiak Leather has integrated claw technology into its American IWB holster. If you are not familiar with the claw, it helps conceal the pistol by applying pressure to the inside of the belt and rotating the grip of the pistol towards your body for maximum concealment.

The claw is made up of three layers of rosewood and 10 layers of carbon fiber, with an overall thickness of about .2025 inch. Kusiak uses Shellac all-natural sealant and it makes the wood as waterproof as you would expect leather to be. Paraffin wax and silicone lubricant are added to the inside to make your pistol glide in and out easily and also to further protect the finish of your pistol.

An all-American product, the American IWB features a second layer of 5-6 ounce leather over the upper section and sweat guard for added reinforcement. This not only makes it stronger, but also allows it to stay open, making reholstering easier.

www.kusiakleather.com





R GRIZZLE LEATHER

The GS2 (Georgia Snap 2) is a pancake-style holster designed to be worn behind the hip. It holds close to the body and has an approximate 15-degree forward cant for a smoother draw and better concealment. It uses a Pull-the-Dot snap on each side, in addition to a standard durable snap. The GS2 can easily be put on and taken off without having to remove your belt. It has a molded sight track and comes standard with leather reinforcement on the front/mouth to aid in reholstering.
www.rgrizzleleather.com



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"So good-looking, I don't know whether to wear it or frame it." Tucker Gunleather often gets similar customer reviews. Made of famous Hermann Oak leather and handcrafted, the Tucker Gunleather HF1 remains their most popular belt holster because it's highly customizable and extremely functional.

The HF1 rides close and secure like a pancake holster and stays open for easy reholstering. Customers often comment on how easy it is to break in, yet the HF1 has great retention. The unique design brings the holster in close for easy concealment and all-day comfort. Over the years, more than a dozen Texas Rangers have purchased the HF1.
www.tuckergunleather.com



MERNICKLE HOLSTERS

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www.mernickleholsters.com



LEATHER GOODS, 'BUILT TO LAST'

Hunter Company holsters, slings, more made to stand test of time.

PHOTOS BY HUNTER COMPANY

Hunter Company has been building high-quality, handmade leather goods for avid sportsmen, women and cowboys for nearly 70 years. Started as a holster-focused offshoot of Colorado Saddlery in 1952, the two companies went their separate ways in the ensuing decades, but have once again been reunited under the same roof in Westminster, Colorado.

"To honor our agricultural roots, we build our products out of US steer hides," explains Kendall Howard, Hunter Company vice president. The two brands share a 41,000-square-foot facility where craftsmen construct 100-percent American-made leather goods "built to last generation to generation."

Hunter Company specializes in Western-style cowboy action holsters, and over the years, their remarkable products have caught the eye of some of the most iconic cowboys in American history, including John Wayne and the Lone Ranger, John Hart. Both legends wore Hunter holsters proudly, and Wayne also had a custom-made Colorado Saddlery saddle.

Today, Hunter Company produces a wide array of leather holsters and accoutrements, all manufactured with the same quality and care. "We offer hand-airbrushed rifle slings and



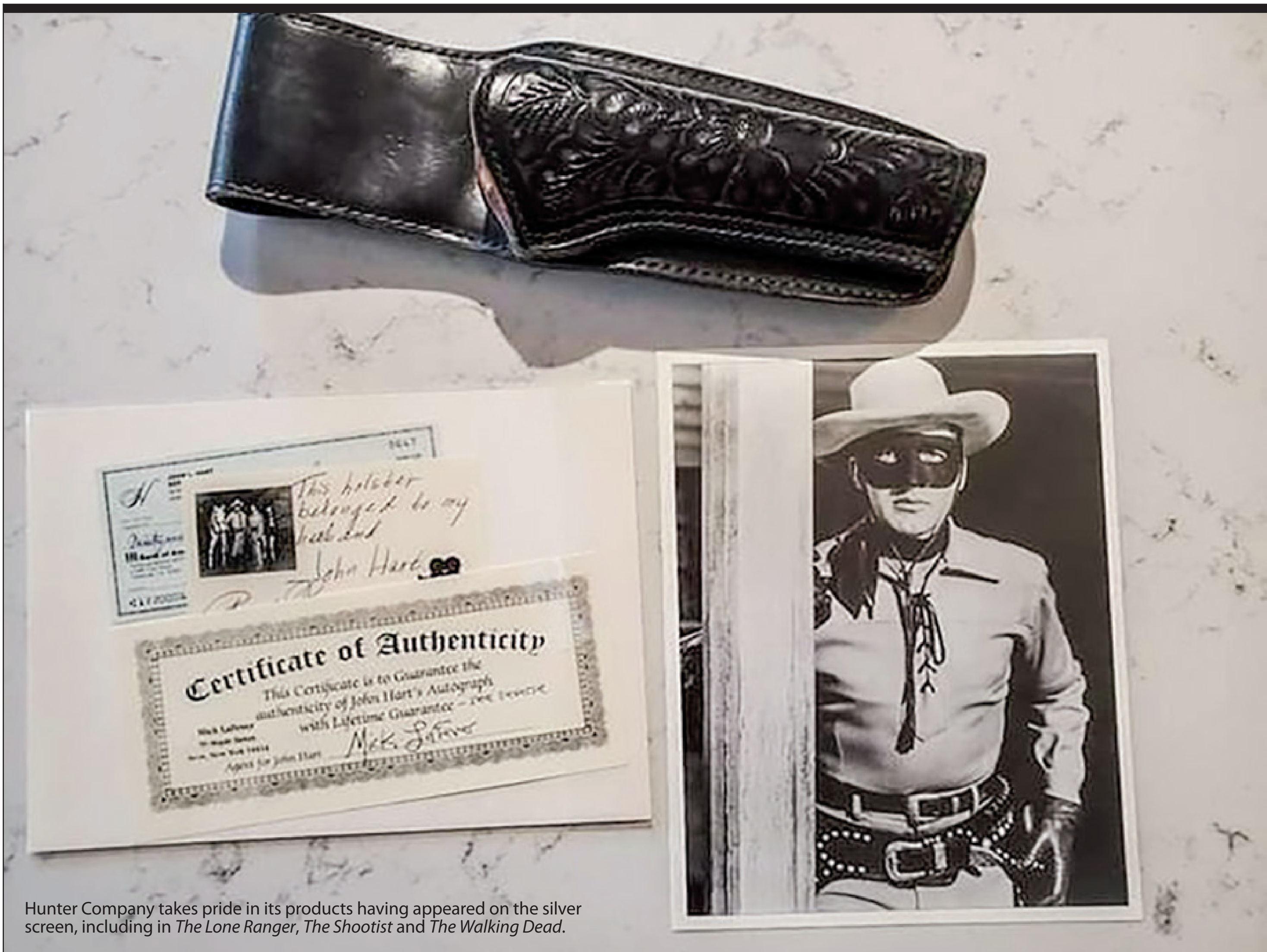
With roots in the post-World War II era, Hunter Company specializes in leather Western-style cowboy action holsters, rifle slings, gun cases, ammo belts, bandoleros and more, all made with US-raised steer hides.

handcraft every holster to ensure quality and longevity," says Howard. "We also handcraft all-leather gun cases and accessories, including leather bandoleros, belts, ammo carriers and cartridge slides."

Over the past 10 to 15 years, Hunter Company has also branched out and is developing new lines of concealed carry and everyday carry holsters. For instance, their new Universal-Fit 3600 Series is designed to become your favorite everyday holster. Featuring full-grain leather, this two-loop pancake holster is handcrafted to hug your hip comfortably and fit universally so that one size fits most. It is available in both chestnut tan and black.

All Hunter Company leather goods are made with the finest materials to ensure a long-lasting product, and the company's "handshake warranty" covers its customers for a lifetime.

"Shooters love our products because we are a brand name that is very affordable," says Howard. "They are familiar with our product and appreciate the quality of our handcraftsmanship,



Hunter Company takes pride in its products having appeared on the silver screen, including in *The Lone Ranger*, *The Shootist* and *The Walking Dead*.



The company's stylish hunter's horn logo adorns some fine leatherwork.

dependability, leather expertise and availability. Our products are fashionable and leather is much more comfortable for EDC. Made in the USA is something that makes our customers proud. We work with distributors all across the country that carry our line of products and directly work with industry leaders like Ruger, Hornady, Henry Rifle, Taurus, Heritage and many more. As a family-owned business, we continue to foster a culture around our outdoor enthusiastic employees that take pride in the work they do every day." ★

Editor's note: With thousands of premium-quality products now available, Hunter Company has a holster for you. For more information, visit huntercompany.com.

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With today's unique firearms configurations and accessories, Triad Holsters specializes in custom concealed setups.

PHOTOS BY TRIAD HOLSTERS LLC



Robert and Crissi Knasel began Triad Holsters LLC in their Ohio garage and since mastering molding Kydex, they've sold over 10,000 holsters in less than a decade and Robert recently retired from his city's local fire department to focus on the business.

Triad Holsters LLC began in a garage with one Glock 19 Blue gun and a YouTube video detailing how to heat and mold Kydex.

"I had decided to try to make my own holster after not finding the holster that really met my needs," explains Robert Knasel, who co-owns the company with wife Crissi. "We soon discovered that Kydex holster fabricating was more difficult than it looked, but with years of practice and over 10,000 holsters sold eight years later, we have evolved our product into a precise, highly functional, handcrafted, one-of-a-kind product."

Triad Holsters specializes in quality custom Kydex holsters for law enforcement professionals and the concealed carry gun owner. They offer holsters for a wide range of brands – including Glock, Heckler & Koch, Sig Sauer and Smith & Wesson, among many others – but Knasel says that the company's true forte is their innovation.

"Our greatest strength, that leads to our most popular products, is to innovate methods of retention to securely hold weapon configurations that are complex or unique," he explains. "This includes lights with charging ports, or overly sensitive controls."

Shooters are constantly building new weapon/light/optic configurations and they need a carry setup to match. That's where Triad Holsters comes in, building a specific holster to meet these demands.

"Concealed carry citizens and law enforcement are living in exciting times," says Knasel. "The number of higher capacity weapons, high-lumen lights, and slides capable of allowing for the shooter to mount a red dot optic on their weapon right out of the box creates a situation where we are constantly playing catch-up on offering the many different desirable configurations, and meeting the demand for our products at the same time."

He adds, "Also we are aware that not everyone can budget or find the latest weapon, and so we embrace the products that allow for shooters to retrofit their weapon with a light, utilizing a rail adapter such as the Recover Tactical Product line. We have found new light/weapon configurations that the masses have not yet realized are possible, and we also sell the products on our website to make this a one-stop shop for these major upgrades to include the holster."

It's this attention to detail and craftsmanship that Triad Holsters'


The Glock 43X MOS with the Surefire XSC accompanied by a Triad holster is arguably the finest example of the effort to perfect the capability of comfortable concealed carry.

customers really enjoy about this "boutique company." They are not churning out holster after holster as quickly as they can; rather, they want to build their products better, not faster.

Triad Holsters is located in the countryside of South Vienna, Ohio, surrounded by cornfields, horses and Black Angus cows, but the company is making plans to expand. As such, Knasel recently retired from the City of Springfield (Ohio) Fire Rescue Division after 22 years of service to concentrate on the business' day-to-day operations. He is also retired from the US Army as a combat medic, after initially serving 10 years in the US Submarine Service.

"The tactical, technical and public safety experiences, along with the knowledge and experience of fellow fabricators, bring a solid foundation to our product development," says Knasel. "We are excited to be able to provide to the citizen, but also to many large agencies and branches of the US military, both domestic and abroad. We are extremely blessed to do what we do, and we are looking forward to the challenges and successes ahead." ★

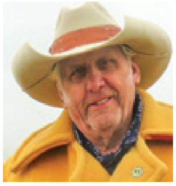
Editor's note: For more information, visit triadholsters.com.

OREGON TRAIL DAYS SHOOT ROLLS AGAIN

Muzzleloaders enjoy the return of an 'outstanding' match held at western Washington state town's local park.

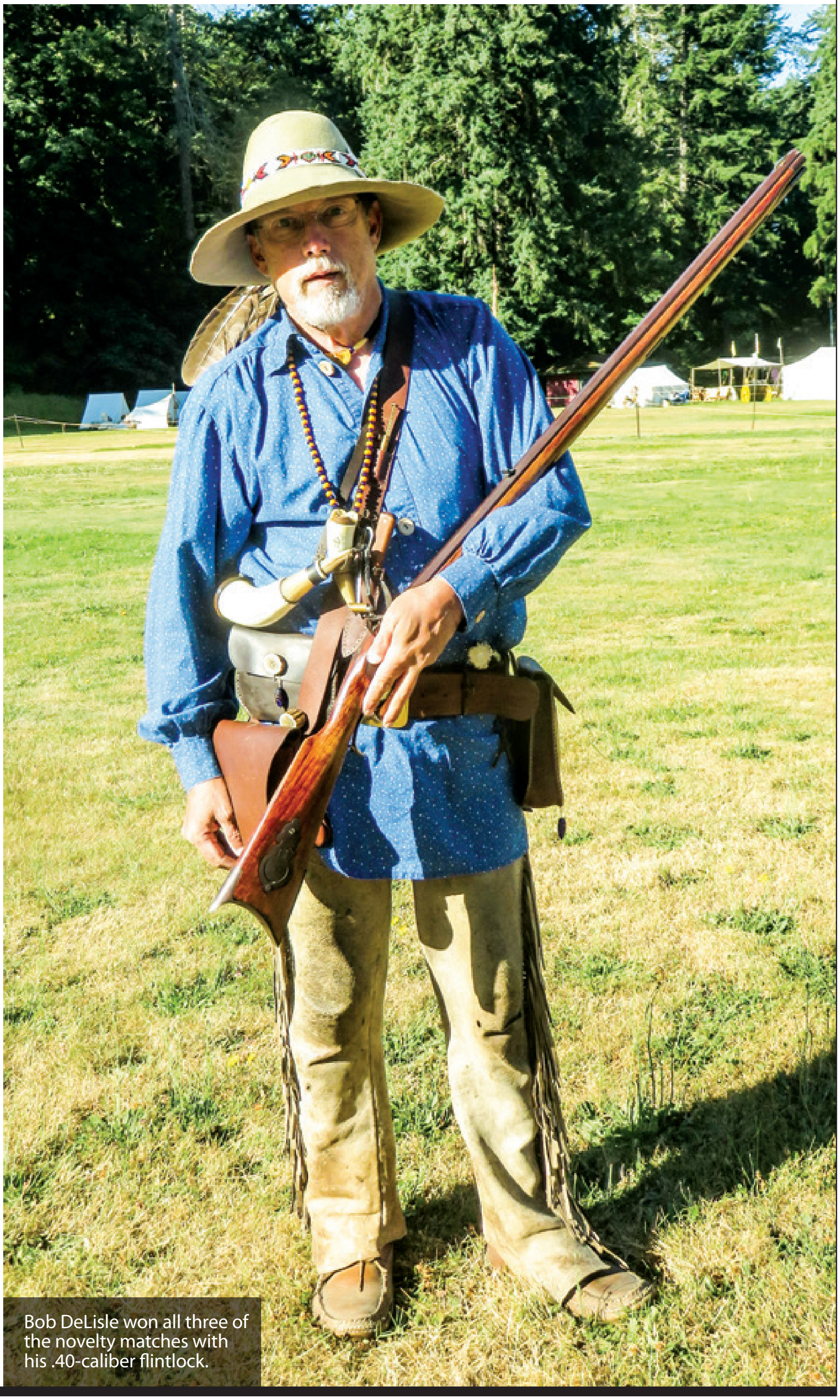
STORY AND PHOTOS BY MIKE NESBITT

The big annual doin's in Tenino, Washington, is really something to see. They have a lot of history to recall, from pioneers to loggers to railroading, and much of it is represented in the city's parade and celebrations. Let me put it this way: If I haven't told you about the Oregon Trail Days celebration in Tenino before, I should have.



My interest in the Oregon Trail Days, as you might guess, is centered around the muzzleloading rifle match, which has been part of the town's celebrations since the 1970s. Presently that rifle match is hosted by the Puget Sound Free Trappers, which is a part of the Capitol City Rifle and Pistol Club, based near Olympia at the south end of Puget Sound. This muzzleloading rifle (and pistol, as well as trade gun) match is run by experienced black powder shooters and it is as much fun as it is outstanding. I say this match is outstanding because it is held right in the city's park.

Shooting muzzleloaders in the city's park is possible because of a strictly controlled firing line and the fact that all bullets go through the paper targets and are quickly absorbed by a natural berm that is behind the target line. Safety receives



Bob DeLisle won all three of the novelty matches with his .40-caliber flintlock.



Kerry Sotelo scored well in the ladies' match.

a highest degree of consideration.

The rifle match at Tenino is the "formal rifle match" (which simply means we shoot at paper targets instead of gongs or silhouettes) of the Washington State Muzzleloaders Association. The WSMA provides medals for first, second and third place for each of the individual rifle targets, plus the aggregate. While our targets might not be as "primitive" as targets at other rendezvous, this is still a match for flintlocks and percussion rifles (but no inlines) shooting patched round balls.

THIS YEAR, THE fair weather for these doin's at Tenino was almost too good and it got really warm out on the firing line. That didn't stop at least 32 shooters from signing up and joining the festivities, actually a rather good turnout considering that this match and the whole Oregon Trail Days event was cancelled last year. It was good doin's all the way around, and those who didn't do their shooting at the WSMA match simply missed in more ways than one.

We'll look at the shooting with a brief rundown of the events. On Saturday morning at 9 a.m., the shooting started with the trade gun match. Participants took a total of 10 shots; the first five were fired from 40 yards, and the next five from 25 yards at the moonshine jug target. I shot next to Jerry Mayo in this match and we both made some good hits, just not enough of them to place.

After that came the pistol match, which consisted of 10 shots at 25 yards, where my good old Hawken-style percussion .50-caliber pistol proved its worth by helping me come in second place. Beating me soundly but just by an X was Allen Tresch, and Bob DeLisle took third place with his .40-caliber flintlock pistol.

The pistol match was followed by the ladies' match, and the ladies did some fine shooting. The finest was young Ayla Hamilton, who has shot at some of our monthly matches. Ayla was also the top shooter in the Junior Class. Here's hopin' she keeps at it!

Then we took a break while those who wanted to could march in the Tenino parade. That was a good long break, almost too long because our shooting wouldn't get going again until 2 p.m. And when the shooting did get started again, it was for the novelty matches, which are just one shot each at three different targets.

THOSE NOVELTY MATCHES were a different turn of events. I had taken my .40-caliber Leman-style percussion rifle just to use in those novelty matches. My first shot was at the Mike Fink target and I thought I could see my hit: in the cup and just above the hair on the head below the cup. That was good!

(All of these novelty targets are printed on paper; we didn't shoot at actual cups or candles.)

Next I shot at the candle and the idea was to shoot out the candle's flame without hitting the candle. After that shot, again I thought I could see a good hit. We shot from 25 yards, so seeing hits on the targets was not difficult. Then I took my shot at the third novelty target, a large V inscribed on paper. The object



Beyond this group of shooters are the tents of "Traders' Row." The entire doin' s were held in a park on the edge of the western Washington town of Tenino, with targets backstopped by a natural berm.



Author Mike Nesbitt fires a shot over cross sticks at the 75-yard target.

was to get the bullet to hit as low inside the V as possible without touching the V itself. That shot I couldn't see and I'll admit, I wondered why.

Bob DeLisle had done his shooting just to my right, also shooting a .40-caliber rifle. When all shooting was done, and our range safety officer (and booshway for the matches) Tom Brown called the range safe, we went forward to check our results. To my complete surprise, all of my targets were bare, not a single hit on the paper. Bob, on the other hand, had made very good hits on all three targets. He won all three of those matches and that's the first time that I recall all three novelty matches being won by one shooter. Good doin's, Bob!

ON SUNDAY MORNING, again at 9 a.m., the shooting started for the rifle aggregate. This is an interesting match, beginning at 90 yards for five offhand shots, then to 75 yards for five shots either offhand or sitting with cross sticks, followed by five more shots at 50 yards, and ending with 10 shots (on two different targets) at 25 yards. After firing at the furthest target, the firing line moved closer to the next firing line. My performance was on the poor side, especially while using the cross sticks, so I have nothing to brag about.

But Lawrence Saltarelli does. He won with the top aggregate score of 179-X. Lawrence did his shooting with a percussion Lyman Great Plains Rifle and he really did a good job of it. And Lawrence followed in the good old Tenino tradition of taking the chair made by Will Ulry as his prize for winning first place.

Other traditional prizes were awarded as well. For the trade gun match, all three places were awarded new powder horns made and donated by Steve Skillman. The Mike Fink novelty match winner was awarded a fifth of whiskey (which Bob DeLisle says he might share). Winners of both the candle snuff and V matches were awarded with pitchers of beer donated by Tenino's Landmark Tavern. There were other prizes for certain events, in addition to WSMA medals and certificates for placement in the pistol match and all of the rifle matches that made up the aggregate. In addition to those prizes, all shooters were awarded with a worthy prize "off of the blanket" in order of their rifle aggregate score. (I got a pound of powder.)

One of the best things about shooting at Tenino during their Oregon Trail Days is that we can do it again next year. Maybe next time I'll have plenty of practice under my belt to be ready.★



Lawrence Saltarelli was the top scoring rifle shooter this year.